# THE EXISTENCE AND NATURES OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. WHITEHEAD'S VIEW OF METAPHYSICS . . . . . . . . . 1

A. The Problem and the Method of Its Solution. . . 1

1. Whitehead's purpose in philosophizing . . . . . 1

2. Role of God in Whitehead's philosophy . . . . . 1

3. Treatment of God in this dissertation . . . . . 2

B. Whitehead's Notion of Philosophy and Philosophic Method. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 4

1. Science and philosophy. . . . . . . . . . . . . 4

a. Abstraction and science.. . . . . . . . . . . . 5

b. Fallacy of "misplaced concreteness.". . . . . . 6

c. Philosophy as the critic of science . . . . . . 7

d. Contrast between science and philosophy . . . . 8

2. Metaphysics and experience. . . . . . . . . . . 9

a. The description and explanation of experience .11

b. Metaphysical laws--their applicability. . . . .12

3. Laws of Nature. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .13

4. Metaphysical and cosmological truth distinguished . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .14

5. Methodology in philosophy . . . . . . . . . . .15

C. The Philosophy of Organism. . . . . . . . . . .18

1. The importance of cosmology . . . . . . . . . .18

2. The relatedness of actual entities. . . . . . .18

3. Organism and atomism. . . . . . . . . . . . . .20

4. Mutual immanence. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .21

D. Factors in Whitehead's Philosophy . . . . . . .22

1. Process--actual entities. . . . . . . . . . . .22

a. Advance into novelty. . . . . . . . . . . . . .25

b. Subjective aim; concrescence. . . . . . . . . . .27

c. Objectification; objective immortality; everlastingness. . . . . . . . . . .32

2. Eternal Objects . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .37

a. Source of the subjective aim of an actual entity; ingression of eternal objects. .38

b. Foundation of novelty; objectification of past actual entities . . . . . . . . . . . .39

c. Determinants of definiteness. . . . . . . . . . .41

3. Creativity. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .43

a. Self-creativeness of actual entities. . . . . . .43

b. Creativity as the ultimate principle of Whitehead's philosophy . . . . . . . . . . . .44

c. Creativity as characterless . . . . . . . . . . .45

d. Creativity as the principle of novelty. . . . . .47

E. Influences on Whitehead concerning God. . . . .48

1. Pre-note on the meaning of influence. . . . . .49

2. The influence of Plato. . . . . . . . . . . . .50

3. The influence of Aristotle. . . . . . . . . . .52

4. The influence of Bradley. . . . . . . . . . . .54

F. Development of Whitehead's Thought concerning God. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .58

1. Principal sources . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .58

2. Discussion of God in Science and the Modern World. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .59

3. Discussion of God in Religion in the Making . .61

4. Discussion of God in Process and Reality. . . .68

II. THE PRIMORDIAL NATURE OF GOD. . . . . . . . . .73

A. The Question of "Proof.". . . . . . . . . . . .73

1. The limitation of all metaphysical investigation . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 73

2. This limitation as applied to the investigation concerning the existence of God in his primordial nature. . . . . . . . . . . . 75

3. Actual entities and the ontological principle . 78

4. Whitehead and proof in "traditional" natural theology. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 79

B. Evidence from Experience. . . . . . . . . . . . 82

1. Actual entities and change. . . . . . . . . . . 82

2. Principle of concretion . . . . . . . . . . . . 89

3. Source of the subjective aim. . . . . . . . . . 93

4. Creative order demands the primordial nature of God . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 97

C. Relation of the Primordial Nature of God to Eternal Objects . . . . . . . . . . . 101

1. Eternal objects as determinants of definiteness. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 102

2. The ordering of eternal objects for ingression. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 105

3. The primordial nature of God as the "home of possibility.". . . . . . . . . . 108

4. Epistemological consideration on the background of Whitehead's treatment of the existence of God in his primordial nature. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 110

D. Relation of the Primordial Nature of God to Creativity . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 113

1. Determinant of creativity . . . . . . . . . . 113

2. Creature of creativity as causa sui . . . . . 115

3. The primordial nature of God as the instrument of novelty for the temporal world. . . . 119

E. General Considerations concerning the Primordial Nature of God. . . . . . . . . . . 123

1. God is not an exception . . . . . . . . . . . . . 124

2. God is di-polar . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 126

3. Concise statement of Whitehead's position . . 126

a. God is eternal. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 127

b. In the primordial nature of God, there is no love for particular individuals. . . . . . 130

c. The primordial nature of God--infinite: no negative prehensions . . . . . . . . . . . . 130

d. The primordial nature of God--deficiently actual. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 131

III. THE CONSEQUENT NATURE OF GOD. . . . . . . . . . 134

A. The Argument for the Existence of God in His Consequent Nature. . . . . . . . . . . 134

1. The principle of relativity . . . . . . . . . 135

2. Efficient causality of the temporal actual entities on the consequent nature of God: Objectification. . . . . . . . 141

B. General Remarks concerning the Consequent Nature of God. . . . . . . . . . . . . 147

1. The consequent nature of God is determined and incomplete . . . . . . . . . . 147

2. The consequent nature of God is conscious . . 152

3. Contrast between the consequent nature of God and temporal actual entities . . . . . 154

4. The consequent nature of God is eternal . . . 155

5. The consequent nature of God is finite. . . . 160

C. The Consequent Nature of God and Creativity: Creative Advance of the World . . . . . . . . 162

1. Relation of objective immortality to creative advance . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 163

2. Self-causation and the creative advance . . . 164

3. Novelty in the consequent nature of God . . . 166

D. The Redemption of the World: God as Savior. . 169

1. The consequent nature of God loses nothing that can be saved . . . . . . . . . . . 169

2. Negative prehension in the consequent nature of God. . . . . . . . . . . 170

3. The salvation of the world: its meaning . . . 172

4. Resumé. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 173

5. God is not the totality of his effects. . . . 174

6. Temporal actual entities do not exist in the consequent nature of God in the same mode as in the temporal world. . . . . . 176

7. God as creator and transcendent . . . . . . . 177

8. Divine patience . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 179

9. Temporal actual entities as everlasting in the consequent nature of God . . . . . . . 183

E. God's Superject Nature: The Kingdom of Heaven 188

1. The principle of relativity and the superject nature of God . . . . . . . 190

a. Assertion of the existence of the superject nature of God. . . . . . . . 190

b. Why God has a superject nature. . . . . . . . 191

2. The superject nature of God is eternal. . . . 192

3. Overflow of God: Kingdom of Heaven. . . . . . 193

4. Love of God for the World . . . . . . . . . . 194

IV. CONCLUSION. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 196

A. Positive Value and Significance of Whitehead's Thought Concerning God. . . . . . 196

1. The nature of philosophy. . . . . . . . . . . 196

2. The attack on "misplaced concreteness". . . . 197

3. Summary of main points of the dissertation. . 200

4. Comparison of the primordial nature of God and the "fifth way" of Saint Thomas . . . 205

B. Certain Inadequacies. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 212

1. God as a datum in the past of temporal actual entities. . . . . . . . . . . . . 212

2. Is God really the chief exemplification of all metaphysical principles? . . . . . . . 213

3. Negative prehension . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 215

4. The consequent nature of God and the ontological argument. . . . . . . . . . 216

V. APPENDIX: PROFESSOR HARTSHORNE AND THE INTERPRETATION OF WHITEHEAD'S PHILOSOPHY. . . 223

A. Panentheism . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 225

1. What Hartshorne means by "Panentheism". . . . 227

2. Comments and criticisms concerning panentheism. . . . . . . . . . . . . 234

B. Negative Prehension in God. . . . . . . . . . 238

1. Hartshorne's position: There is no negative prehension in God. . . . 238

2. Comparison of this position with certain texts from Process and Reality. . . . 243

BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 255

VITA AUCTORIS . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 263

## SOME STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| *AI*. | *Adventures of Ideas*. |
| *Essays*. | *Essays in Science and Philosophy*. |
| *FR*. | *The Function of Reason*. |
| *MT*. | *Modes of Thought*. |
| *NL*. | *Nature and Life*. |
| *PR*. | *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. |
| *RM*. | *Religion in the Making*. |
| *SMW*. | *Science and the Modern World*. |

# CHAPTER I

## WHITEHEAD'S VIEW OF METAPHYSICS

### A. The Problem and the Method of Its Solution.

#### 1. Whitehead's purpose in philosophizing.

When Alfred North Whitehead set down the main points of his philosophy, he intended his work to be something more than a history of ideas, of the strong points of one position and the weaknesses of another. He did not want to treat isolated "topics." Rather, he thought that a satisfactory explanation of reality would be one in which the connectedness of the elements of experience was clearly exhibited, and that such an explanation could best be expressed in a scheme of ideas which "develop their meaning by confrontation with the various topics of experience, and...elaborate an adequate cosmology in terms of which all particular topics find them (sic) interconnections."[1]

#### 2. The role of God in Whitehead's philosophy.

One of the most important elements in Whitehead's explanation of reality is his treatment of God.

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[1] PR, vii. References to Process and Reality, as well as to Whitehead's other works, will be to the particular American editions listed in the bibliography and on a special page at the outset of the dissertation. The initials of the title will be used consistently throughout the dissertation.

His discussion of this topic marks a radical departure from those investigations which are grouped under the heading of "traditional" natural theology. This is part of the reason for the interest which Whitehead's doctrine of God bears for his reader. However, there is a more basic interest in the thought of Whitehead concerning God because God is fundamental to Whitehead's explanation of the reality of his direct and immediate experience.

Whitehead discusses the question of the existence of God, because of what he discovers in the beings of his experience. He considers the primordial and consequent natures of God because he is convinced that he should discuss them, in order to complete the explanation of his experience. He does not advert to problems simply because the problems are classical, in the sense that they have been treated in various ways by leading philosophers. Whitehead treats a question as it helps him to expose--even in an incomplete way--the nature of the reality around him.

### 3. Treatment of God in this dissertation.

In this dissertation one main problem will be discussed: Whitehead's thought on the existence and natures of God. The various elements of his philosophy are so closely related that it is impossible to discuss one topic in isolation from every other topic. However, those aspects of Whitehead's thought which do not deal directly with the question of God, or which do not lead to a discussion of God will be omitted from consideration, although they will be presupposed.

In this introduction, Whitehead's general views on method and metaphysics will be outlined briefly. Then the author will discuss the philosophy of organism, including the principal factors in Whitehead's philosophy, namely, actual entities, eternal objects, and creativity, in order to show why he is led to introduce God into his cosmological scheme.

The author will try to show the main influences on the thought of Whitehead concerning the problem of God. There will be a tracing of Whitehead's thought concerning God, from its explicit beginning in *Science and the Modern World*, through its expansion and development in *Religion in the Making*, to its full treatment and expression in Whitehead's major philosophical work, *Process and Reality*. Reference will be made to other of Whitehead's works, such as *The Function of Reason* and *Adventures of Ideas*, when these references help to develop the thought found in his principal works dealing with God.

The second chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the explicit teaching on the existence of God in his primordial nature. Chapter three will deal with the consequent and superject natures of God. The final chapter will be devoted to a summary of the investigation, and to an evaluation, both positive and negative, of the thought of Whitehead concerning God. An appendix will discuss the problem of whether Whitehead's thought is a version of Panentheism, as Charles Hartshorne maintains it to be in The Divine Relativity[2] and other works.

## B. Whitehead's Notion of Philosophy and Philosophic Method.

As far as his philosophic method is concerned, Whitehead is very much a realist. This fact can easily be discovered by an examination of his understanding of the function of abstraction in science, and of his discussion of the relation between science and philosophy. This Whiteheadean emphasis on a realistic understanding of the problems of philosophy will be evident throughout the discussion of his notion of God. His criterion for judging whether a certain element of experience is genuinely metaphysical is the applicability of the element to all phases of experience, to all actual entities.

### 1. Science and philosophy.

Whitehead feels that it is necessary to compare philosophy and science, to determine those characteristics which are common, and to decide whether philosophy is a science. The principal characteristic in view of which science and philosophy are compared by Whitehead is the process of abstraction, essential to science. If philosophy concentrates on abstraction as its fundamental method, then it is likely that it is a science. But if the philosophic method is primarily non-abstractive, then philosophy cannot be a science.

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[2] (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1948.)

a. Abstraction and science.

It is certainly apparent that many of the sciences deal with topics that are to a great degree abstract. Not many who admit scientific knowledge will deny this. The chemist is not concerned with every aspect of the beings which he analyzes in his laboratory, but only with the chemical properties and chemical changes which they undergo. The atomic physicist is not concerned primarily with the chemical changes which beings undergo but with the molecular and nuclear structure of such beings. However, occasionally the proponents of a particular science will assert that the subject matter of their investigation is something real and concrete, rather than something which does not transcend the realm of the abstract in any way. And some scientists who make this assertion may be right. It is just at this point where philosophy must exercise its function as critic of the method of the sciences. Philosophy is not "just another" science, with no more generality than any other science. On the contrary, philosophy must be that discipline which orders and regulates the sciences, which keeps them in contact with experience, which "confronts the sciences with concrete fact."[3] If it fails to do this, philosophy does not fulfill its critical function.

b. Fallacy of "misplaced concreteness."

In abstraction certainly some things are emphasized and others are neglected.[4] When a science considers a certain aspect of reality and treats certain formal relations within a being, it is not viewing something which exists in the concrete world, in any sense whatsoever. It is dealing with an abstraction. Science is unable to deal with the concrete world precisely because it treats of abstractions.[5]

Science oversteps its proper sphere of influence and makes a serious mistake when it supposes and asserts that its subject matter is somehow the reality of the concrete world, either totally or in part. Although it is a legitimate enterprise for a scientist to consider certain categories of thought and classification, still he must be ever-mindful of the degree of abstraction involved in his discipline or investigation. A scientist who fails to make this distinction or realization falls into the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness."[6]

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[3] SMW, 126-127.

[4] NL, 19.

[5] MT, 25.

[6] PR, 11. "...This fallacy consists in neglecting the degree of abstraction involved when an actual entity is considered merely so far as it exemplifies

To avoid misleading assertions, and to retain its relevance to reality, an abstract doctrine of science must be related to the "concrete unity of experience," from which it has been derived and from which it obtains its interest for the scientist. A proposition which fails to retain this reference of relevance is simply erroneous.[7]

c. Philosophy as the critic of science.

Whitehead maintains that it is the task of philosophy to criticize the first principles of the various sciences. These first principles have to be related to each other, and this task can be accomplished only by a mode of thought manifesting more generality than the first principles which it is seeking to relate.[8] In its attempt to investigate the nature of experience, philosophy must make intelligible the contents of the human mind; it must set in order the "fragments" of the first principles of the special sciences; it must act as critic of the "abstractions

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certain categories of thought. There are aspects of actualities which are simply ignored so long as we restrict thought to these categories. Thus the success of a philosophy is to be measured by its comparative avoidance of this fallacy, when thought is restricted within its categories."

Cf. SMW, III, for Whitehead's historical treatment of the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness."

[7] Alfred North Whitehead, "Mathematics and the Good," The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, P. A. Schilpp, ed. Library of Living Philosophers: III. (2nd ed., New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1951), 680.

[8] PR, 15.

which govern special modes of thought."[9]

d. Contrast between science and philosophy.

Abstraction certainly is a valid procedure, without which the human mind would not be able to survive for any great length of time. The thing that Whitehead insists on is that the degree of abstraction not be overlooked and the abstraction mistaken for the reality.[10] As is widely held, in every act of abstraction there is an emphasis on some aspects of the experience really presented, and a consequent lack of attention to other aspects of the same experience. This

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[9] MT, 67. "Philosophy is the attempt to make manifest the fundamental evidence as to the nature of things. Upon the presupposition of this evidence, all understanding rests. A correctly verbalized philosophy mobilizes this basic experience which all premises presuppose. It makes the content of the human mind manageable; it adds meaning to fragmentary details; it discloses disjunctions and conjunctions, consistencies and inconsistencies. Philosophy is the criticism of abstractions which govern special modes of thought.

It follows that philosophy, in any proper sense of the term, cannot be proved. For proof is based on abstraction. Philosophy is either self-evident, or it is not philosophy. The attempt of any philosophic discourse should be to produce self-evidence. Of course it is impossible to achieve any such aim. But, none the less, all inference in philosophy is a sign of that imperfection which clings to all human endeavour. The aim of philosophy is sheer disclosure."

In the passage just quoted, Whitehead goes on to show the relation of proof to abstraction, and thence the relation of both of these to philosophy. The most important point in the entire passage is that a discipline, such as philosophy, cannot be the judge of various modes of abstract thought, if it is itself abstract. Again he insists--by implication--that something more general than the abstract modes are needed to criticize such modes of thought.

[10] Cf. PR, 11.

emphasis is for the purpose of consideration of those aspects of reality which are thus stressed. This abstraction might be either of two kinds: an emphasis upon, and consideration of, one particular segment of the experience really presented--which segment would be an actual entity; or an alternate emphasis and consideration, that of a particular category applicable to some feature of an actual entity. Whitehead maintains that this second mode of abstraction is necessary for the thought of a finite entity. All science is based on this type of abstraction. On the other hand, it is the task of philosophy to "reverse this process and thus to exhibit the fusion of analysis with actuality. It follows that philosophy is not a science."[11]

## 2. Metaphysics and experience.

Whitehead is most explicit in stating what he holds philosophy to be, or more exactly, what he maintains metaphysics to be. In the second chapter of

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[11] Whitehead, The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, 681.

In Whitehead's own terminology, the first emphasis would be a consideration of an actual entity as a particular characterization of the fundamental and underlying creativity. Neither "actual entity" nor "creativity" are here defined. This must wait for a later part of this introductory chapter.

For the present, let the first emphasis be thought of as similar to a consideration of one being apart from other beings (abstractio formae totius), and the second emphasis as similar to a consideration of an aspect of a being apart from other aspects of the same being (abstractio formae partis).

Religion in the Making, he states that "by 'metaphysics' I mean the science which seeks to discover the general ideas which are indispensably relevant to the analysis of everything which happens."[12]

He definitely maintains that metaphysics ought to be in complete accord with reality. The reality being explained should not be revised in order to force it into conformity with a metaphysical scheme already constructed. Rather, if the metaphysical explanation and the reality being explained are not in conformity with each other, then it is the metaphysics--and not the reality--which is at fault and which has to be reworked and revised. Whitehead sums up the nature and function of metaphysics as follows:

> Whatever is found in 'practice' must lie within the scope of the metaphysical description. When the description fails to include the 'practice,' the metaphysics is inadequate and requires revision. There can be no appeal to practice to supplement metaphysics, so long as we remain contented with our metaphysical doctrines. Metaphysics is nothing but the description of the generalities which apply to all the details of practice.[13]

Two difficulties arise in any metaphysical description of reality: the inadequacy of language as a medium of expression for ideas; and the obstacles which men must overcome in order to achieve any real insight into the nature of the reality which they are trying to elucidate.[14] A philosopher will be successful in his attempt to give a coherent account of experience in direct proportion to the amount he is able to overcome these two difficulties.

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[12] RM, 84.

[13] PR, 19.

[14] Ibid., 20; 6-7.

a. The description and explanation of experience.

Whitehead is continually relating philosophy to the explanation of experience. He maintains that it is the task of philosophy to interpret the elements of experience within a system of ideas which is coherent, logical, and necessary.[15]

Since men are primarily concerned, or ought to be so concerned, with the explanation of their immediate experience, one of the first tasks which confronts them as philosophers is the observation, by means of analysis, of the elements which compose the experience which they are investigating. However, at this point one cannot proceed with facility, precisely because these elements do not present themselves in a clear-cut and distinct way. It is only with great effort that an investigator can bring any such analysis to a reasonably intelligible level of development.[16]

In constructing a metaphysical scheme, one must remember that even if the previous difficulty about insight be cleared away, there still remains a significant barrier between the metaphysician and those to whom he may wish to communicate his insights. This is the barrier of language. It is possible that unclear insights (or partial insights) may be made progressively opaque by language which serves only to confuse rather than to clarify. It is also possible that the communication of some genuine insights into the nature of immediate experience may be stymied by language which does not do justice to the thought which it is intended to convey. Metaphysics is constantly burdened with the task of trying to remove the difficulties imposed upon it by language.[17]

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[15] *Ibid*., 4. "Speculative philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of 'interpretation' I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme...."

[16] *Ibid*., 20.

Philosophy in general or metaphysics in particular does not function as a fabricator of interpretations of reality. On the contrary, it takes those interpretations which are inextricably intertwined in immediate experience, and it tries to serve as a critic of such interpretations, tries to provide justification for such interpretations, and where this fails, tries to select those interpretations of reality which will successfully submit to the test of justification and criticism.[18]

b. Metaphysical laws--their applicability.

Whitehead maintains that metaphysical laws have the highest generality attached to them. It is extremely difficult to formulate metaphysical generalities or laws, precisely because one is dealing with the reality presented in his own experience, and this reality does not always manifest those characteristics which can be applied to all actual entities at the present time or at any other time.[19] If the laws of nature which are formulated can be applied to all actual entities without exception, then they are metaphysical laws. Otherwise, they fall short of this ideal. They may be general laws, valid in their application to all entities at the present time, but they are not metaphysical laws.

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[17] *Ibid.*, 6-7.

[18] *Ibid.*, 22.

### 3. Laws of nature.

The laws of this world, i.e., the laws of nature, do exhibit generality of application, but they fail to support any claim for their metaphysical necessity. They are conceptual frameworks within which human experience can be explained. But they admit of exceptions. They are not absolute.[20] Perhaps it would be possible to transform these particular "Laws of Nature" into laws with metaphysical generality, necessity, and applicability, but only on the condition that the present set-up or society be maintained. There is no assurance in the workings of nature that such a situation is possible. The laws governing the happenings in nature at the present time have arisen through a gradual process of development and perfection. There is no real reason to believe that other laws will not arise in the same way, which will overthrow the laws that men presently maintain to be true. Men are warned that they live in a special--rather than a "standard"--cosmic opoch by the fact that there are arbitrary or given elements present in the laws of nature.[21]

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[19] Ibid., 138-139.

[20] NL, 30-31.

### 4. Metaphysical and cosmological truth distinguished.

A complete metaphysics of experience may not be possible in the present epoch. Yet it is within the ability of human reason to examine the experience which really presents itself to man, and to formulate such general laws as can be derived from, and observed in, that experiential world. The laws of such a world, under the limitations of their applicability, would be laws of nature, in short, "cosmic laws." The investigation of experience and of the laws of nature of the present epoch can quite properly be termed *Cosmology*.[22]

Whitehead brings out a very similar notion at the end of his discussion on a person's "perception" of a cup and a saucer as two existing actual entities.

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[21] *PR*, 139.

[22] *FR*, 61.

The judgments which could be made about these two entities might be correct, and he has previously asserted that one may find exemplified in them the metaphysical truth that, "One entity plus one entity makes two entities." In referring to the fact that the cup and saucer are here and now existing, Whitehead observes that

> ...There can be no reasonable doubt as to the truth of this assumption in this particular example. But in making it, we are very far from the metaphysical proposition from which we started. We are in fact stating a truth concerning the wide societies of entities amid which our lives are placed. It is a truth concerning the cosmos, but not a metaphysical truth.[23]

Difficult thought he deems metaphysical knowledge to be, Whitehead yet maintains that without at least a minimum of metaphysical knowledge, man and civilization cannot long survive. Speculative endeavour beyond the realm of immediate experience does manifest a certain dependence upon metaphysics. This same extension of thought lays man open and liable to error. In spite of this, man needs metaphysics to furnish purpose to his endeavours and to guide his imagination. "Apart from metaphysical presupposition there can be no civilization."[24]

## 5. Methodology in philosophy.

Every sort of investigation, lest it dissolve into aimless wandering, must adopt a method. The method which Whitehead proposes, for the discovery of an adequate explanation of reality is the method which begins with experience, and which strives to maintain a careful scrutiny of the constant elements in reality. Thus, even when one is unable to keep in focus the several factors in experience, still he is able to grasp tenaciously those elements which are common to the several factors.[25] Whitehead goes on to say that by comparing those elements in experience which are consistent with the former elements, much light and understanding can be shed on the common and consistent elements.

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[23] PR, 302.

[24] AI, 163-164.

When a philosophical explanation is expounded, it finds immediately some adherents, who cling to it and affirm it, without considering its logical consistency (or the lack of a logical consistency). Some flaws in consistency and coherence are easily overlooked when an explanation is first expounded. But once it has become established--in what might be appointed a "school"--then it is examined with more care, in order to ferret out any elements of incoherence which may be dormant in its integral parts.[26] Though a system of philosophy may be examined and be found deficient in coherence, and thus may be almost summarily rejected, yet it has left its mark on the men who have considered it and have rejected it, as well as on those who have considered it and adopted it without question.[27]

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[25] PR, 7.

[26] Ibid., 9.

[27] Ibid., 16.

Whitehead warns his readers against one of the principal difficulties in philosophy, even among those men who are intent on grounding their investigations in the evidence of ordinary human experience. This is the danger of allowing the methodology which one employs to become narrow in scope. While Whitehead maintains that every man who starts out to be a realist will have an empirical basis to his philosophy, he also admits the ease with which many of these same men will permit themselves to slip into a rut, and will allow their method to be narrowed. After grasping a general pattern which may lie behind some particular segment of experience, one tends to judge everything in terms of the general pattern which he has grasped. Another by-product of generalization seems to be the fact that conflicting doctrines are rejected on the basis of their non-conformity with a position strongly held.[28]

There is possible a corresponding kind of narrowness, which should also be avoided, a narrowness in the selection of evidence. This would be found in the work of a philosopher who refused to consider or to accept any segments of experience which did not fit in with generalizations and conclusions that he had previously formulated. Such a man would be forcing his experience to fit his metaphysics, rather than allowing his metaphysics to be formulated through a consideration of the elements of experience. Probably there are many causes of this second type of narrowness in perspective, most of which are of an individual sort.[29]

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[28] FR, 8.

## C. The Philosophy of Organism.

### 1. The importance of cosmology.

With the cosmological-metaphysical method which he employs and develops, Whitehead enunciates a system, which he designates as an organic philosophy, or more simply, organism. Just as an adequate philosophy needs a satisfactory cosmology,[30] so also when he discusses his organic philosophy, Whitehead states as its very aim the expression of a coherent cosmology. He leaves little room for doubt about the importance which he accords to cosmology in his explanation of experience.[31]

### 2. The relatedness of actual entities.

Throughout experience, there runs the relatedness of all actual entities. This relatedness is inextricably fundamental to any explanation or understanding of Whitehead's metaphysics. While it is partially true that actual entities can be considered as existing apart from one another, still it is impossible for them to exist in separation or isolation. The real world is shot through with the unity of all actual entities, overwhelming in extent, but present nonetheless.[32]

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[29] PR, 512. "The chief danger to philosophy is narrowness in the selection of evidence. This narrowness arises from the idiosyncrasies and timidities of particular authors, of particular social groups, of particular schools of thought, of particular epochs in the history of civilization. The evidence relied upon is arbitrarily biased by the temperaments of individuals, by the provincialities of groups, and by the limitations of schemes of thought."

[30] FR, 22,23.

[31] PR, 196.

If speculative philosophy is to attain its ideal, or if it is even to approximate this ideal, then it is impossible that an actual entity be conceived in complete abstraction from every other actual entity. Speculative philosophy should manifest this truth. The ideal of speculative philosophy is that "its fundamental notions shall not seem capable of abstraction from each other.[33]

The fact that no actual entity exists in separateness from any other actual entity is substantiated by Whitehead's assertion that the past of an actual entity is constituted by all the preceding actual entities. The present actual entity makes its own contribution to the reality of the world by its prehension of all the actual entities which form its past, and by becoming part of the past of some future actual entity.[34]

In treating the concepts which are basic to religion, he states that relations exist among the various component factors of the objective world, and that the objective world is derivative from these relationships. However, it is equally necessary that the objective world as community be present to each of the individual members of that world. Without the community the individual would be unable to exist.[35] Whitehead says that every individual occasion mirrors within itself the entire community or universe which forms its past. Throughout this process, the individual remains a component of the community.[36]

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[32] SMW, 251.

[33] PR, 5.

[34] SMW, 253.

### 3. Organism and Atomism.

It is a distinctive feature of Whitehead's thought that simultaneously he attempts to maintain the "commonness" of an organic philosophy and the "separateness" of an atomistic philosophy. He holds that creatures certainly are atomic; but that this fact does not exclude the possibility of relatedness among creatures. He puts it in these words:

> Thus the ultimate metaphysical truth is atomism. The creatures are atomic....But atomism does not exclude complexity, and universal relativity. Each atom is a system of all things.[37]

A creature or "actual occasion" is derived from a creative process, and is related to other actual occasions which form its past, because of the derivation of the present actual occasion from the creative process. Although every actual occasion is "self-creative," yet it retains its relatedness because of its prehension of other actual occasions.[38]

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[35] RM, 59.

[36] Ibid., 91.

[37] PR, 53.

[38] Ibid., 124.

### 4. Mutual immanence.

Man is able to discover the togetherness of the things which are present to him in experience. Each event is somehow involved in every other event. The togetherness which things exhibit in experience leads Whitehead to assert a doctrine of mutual immanence.[39] In fact, in order to have a doctrine of causality which is really intelligible, it is necessary to maintain some kind of theory of mutual immanence. There is a certain given element in every occasion. This element is the world as present in the past of that occasion. Being in the past of another occasion, a particular actual occasion can exert a real causal influence upon that occasion, and can transmit to this other occasion some of its own perfection.[40]

There is a certain organic unity to the process by which actual occasions are related to one another. If one part of the process is taken away from the process itself, then the whole scheme collapses. All activities are necessary for each activity. The process knows no real boundaries. Boundaries are abstractions, which when imposed destroy the unity of the process. There are no activities which are self-contained, completely isolated from all other activities. When one activity is considered in isolation from all other activities, something in the very nature of the process or activity is omitted from consideration.

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[39] NL, 41.

[40] Ibid., 42.

There is no avoiding the fact that activities are part of an environment.[41]

The meaning which Whitehead gives to "organism" is two-fold. The microscopic meaning is concerned with the formal constitution of actual occasions as units of experience. The macroscopic meaning treats the past of the actual occasion, the world which is given in the prehensions which constitute the nature or essence of the actual occasion. The latter element in an actual occasion acts as a limiting and determining factor, since these and only these data are provided for prehension by the actual occasion. In addition, the actual world which is given in the experience of an actual occasion provides a chance for the occasion's realization.[42]

### D. Factors in Whitehead's Philosophy.

#### 1. Process--actual entities.

Whitehead holds that the job of philosophy is to make intelligible, as much as possible, the world of experience. Man's experience presents actual entities to him. They are presented in a definite way. An actual entity manifests itself as a process of becoming.[43] An entity does not show itself to be isolated from the rest of reality. Rather it indicates that it is one among many such actual entities or occasions.

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[41] *Ibid.*, 15-16.

[42] *PR*, 196-197.

[43] *SMW*, 253.

An actual occasion needs these other occasions. Without them it could not exist. They provide the past from which the present actual occasions arise.[44] These entities are the primary units of the world. An investigation cannot go beyond actual entities. Everything real is either an actual entity or a principle which is explanatory of an actual entity. Since the world is analyzable into these occasions, it is correct to designate the world as a "community of occasions."[45]

In Process and Reality, Whitehead uses similar terminology in stressing the basic importance of actual entities in any explanation of reality. There is nothing beyond actual entities which can afford information to an investigator. Certain actual entities which can afford information may differ from others; "yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level."[46]

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[44] Ibid. Whitehead often uses the terms "actual entity" and "actual occasion" synonymously, but always with the reservation expressed in the following passage:

"...the term 'actual occasion' is used synonymously with 'actual entity'; but chiefly when its character of extensiveness has some direct relevance to the discussion, either extensiveness in the form of temporal extensiveness, that is to say 'duration' or extensiveness in the form of spatial extensiveness." (PR, 119.)

At a slightly later point in Process and Reality, Whitehead makes another determination in his use of the two terms. This time it concerns the applicability of the terms to God.

"In the subsequent discussion 'actual entity' will be taken to mean a conditioned actual entity of the temporal world, unless God is expressly included in the discussion. The term 'actual occasion' will always exclude God from its scope." (PR, 135.)

[45] RM, 91.

Every actual entity has two principal aspects, that of self-cause, and that of creature. The actual occasion is its own creative act. It unifies or brings together the actual world. It achieves this in its role as a mode of creativity. The actual occasion is also the creature which is the "end product", emerging from the process of self-creation. Thus, the creative act holds a real value for the creature, since it is constitutive of the creature. It is important to realize that there are not two entities, the act of creation and the creature which is created. Rather, there is the one actual entity, which is a self-creative creature, always moving forward and realizing itself in new ways.[47]

Whitehead maintains "(1) That the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities. Thus actual entities are creatures; they are also termed 'actual occasions.'"[48] Every actual entity is not only involved in a process of becoming. Its very being is constituted by this process of becoming. An entity does not have two aspects about it, one which is its being and another which is its becoming. The being and the becoming of an actual entity are not independent of each other. This is the "principle of process" of an actual antity.[49]

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[46] PR, 27-28.

[47] RM, 101-102.

[48] PR, 33. "First Category of Explanation."

Every actual entity has the capability for entering into the past of every other actual entity.[50] Many actual entities enter into the past of a present actual entity when that actual entity feels or "prehends" the other actual entities. Every feeling or prehension has three elements or factors connected with it. There is, first of all, the subject which feels or prehends. There is also the "datum" of experience which is felt by the subject. Finally, there is the subjective form of the feeling or prehension, which is the way in which the subject feels the datum. The subject is the actual entity which is constituted by the process of feeling. There are two types of prehensions, physical prehensions and conceptual prehensions. The physical prehensions have as their object or datum other actual entities, while the conceptual prehensions have as their object or datum eternal objects.[51] An actual entity is "constituted" by its feeling of its data. It "develops" by feeling these data.

a. Advance into novelty.

At one instant actual entities appear to be different from what "they were" at another instant.

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[49] Ibid., 34-35.

[50] Ibid., 33.

[51] Ibid., 35.

However, they do not "undergo" change. An actual entity is the subject which experiences, and simultaneously is the resultant--or "superject"--of the process of experiencing. Whitehead is here trying to stress and assert the Heraclitean notion that there is no enduring, numerically identical subject which remains throughout a change. He is most explicit on this point.

> It is fundamental to the metaphysical doctrine of the philosophy of organism, that the notion of an actual entity as the unchanging subject of change is completely abandoned. An actual entity is at once the subject experiencing and the superject of its experiences...[52]

Whitehead has said that the actual world is a process, and that the process is one which is constitutive of actual entities.[53] This process of becoming is a movement to a new mode of existence--he calls it "a creative advance into novelty." Every actual entity has a world which is relevant to its becoming. This is its own actual world.[54]

In Process and Reality, Whitehead talks of the way in which actual entities achieve this advance into novelty. Each actual entity breaks off or atomizes the "extensive continuum," which is nothing other than the potentiality for division. Any division of what the extensive continuum is in itself is brought about by an actual entity. The objectification of certain actual occasions within a present actual entity realizes effectively the potentiality of the continuum. This is the way in which many entities (in the continuum) are united (in the actual entity). When there is a becoming of an actual entity, what was potential has become actual.[55]

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[52] Ibid., 43.

[53] Ibid., 33.

[54] Ibid., 42.

There is a difficulty at this point. Out of the entire continuum, the actual entity atomizes or prehends only a certain part or region. There must be a reason why the actual entity atomizes a certain region rather than some other region. As Whitehead points out:

> ...In the mere extensive continuum there is no principle to determine what regional quanta shall be atomized, so far as to form the real perspective standpoint for the primary date constituting the basic phase in the concrescence of an actual entity...[56]

The breaking-off or "atomizing" of the extensive continuum is the first point which the author will treat in his attempt to show why Whitehead is led to introduce the existence of God in his primordial nature in explaining the reality of experience. It will be discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation.

b. Subjective aim; concrescence.

In its process of becoming, an actual entity becomes in a very definite way. It becomes something rather than nothing. Yet it cannot become everything; some things must be excluded from its process of becoming as not relevant. The beings which form the past ("data") of a present actual entity are unified by that entity's prehension of them. The way in which these "data" are included in the actual entity is the subjective form of the actual entity. By means of this subjective form, some things are excluded from feeling by the entity and others are included. The actual entity aims at self-actualization by means of its prehensions of the "data" of its past.[57]

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[55] Ibid., 104.

[56] Ibid., 104.

In the process of becoming which constitutes every actual entity, there is a unification of many entities. These entities were previously only in potency to unification in the present actual entity. Now they are really unified in this actual entity; they have "grown together." They are literally concrete. Whitehead expresses this by saying that the actual entity is "the real concrescence of many potentials."[58] The actual entity is not distinct from the concrescence; there are not two items involved, but only one.[59]

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[57] NL, 27.

[58] PR, 33. "Second Category of Explanation."

[59] Ibid., 321. "...Each instance of concrescence is itself the novel individual thing in question. There are not 'the concrescence' and the 'novel' thing': when we analyze the novel thing we find nothing but the concrescence..."

In his book on Whitehead's metaphysics, Ivor Leclerc cites a pertinent passage in Process and Reality which shows well that the subjective aim of an actual entity attempts to achieve the subject-superject; "the subject-superject is the end which the activity aims to achieve."[60]

> ...The subject-superject is the purpose of the process originating the feelings. The feelings are inseparable from the end at which they aim; and this end is the feeler. The feelings aim at the feeler, as their final cause. The feelings are what they are in order that their subject may be what it is...[61]

Whitehead's strongest statement about the self-creative aspect of an actual entity comes in the second part of Process and Reality. Identifying the becoming and the process of the actual entity,[62] Whitehead goes on to specify the actual entity as the product of the past, which acts as its efficient cause(s).

> ...An actual entity is at once the product of the efficient past, and is also, in Spinoza's phrase, causa sui. Every philosophy recognizes, in some form or other, this factor of self-causation, in what it takes to be ultimate actual fact...[63]

The self-creative aspect of an actual entity is intimately linked to the subjective aim. The subjective aim controls the becoming of the subject.[64] In fact, the subjective aim is that aspect by which an actual entity determines itself as a unity of one creature. This is the context in which Whitehead is discussing the indivisibility of the subjective aim, and its relation to the ontological principle. He maintains that the subjective aim of an actual entity is not divisible since it is concerned with both the physical prehensions and the conceptual prehensions of the actual entity. If the subjective aim were concerned only with the physical prehensions of a temporal actual entity, then there would be no reason to account for the later conceptual prehensions, no subjective forms for such prehensions. Whitehead himself gives the consequences of admitting the divisibility of the subjective aim:

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[60] Ivor Leclerc. Whitehead's Metaphysics: An Introductory Exposition. (London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1958), 170.

[61] PR, 339. Quoted in Leclerc, 170.

[62] Cf. "First Category of Explanation," PR, 33.

[63] Ibid., 228.

> ...If we confine attention to the prehensions concerned with the earlier half, their subjective forms have arisen from nothing. For the subjective aim which belongs to the whole is not excluded. The evolution of subjective form could not be referred to any actuality. The ontological principle has been violated. Something has floated into the world from nowhere.[65]

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[64] *Ibid.*, 37.

[65] *Ibid.*, 108. Professor Leonard Eslick, in an article entitled, "Substance, Change and Causality in Whitehead," says--in a note to the text quoted above--"But even the subjective aim *in its entirety* by which the actual occasion is self-creative cannot be referred in its final origin to any *actuality*, but only to the irrational spontaneity of Creativity, Whitehead's material principle. Something *has* floated into the world from nowhere, and Whitehead's ontological principle seems to be violated." (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XVIII, no. 4 (June, 1958), 51, n. 27.)

The ontological principle mentioned here is fundamental to any understanding of Whitehead's notion of causality. It will be given considerable treatment in discussing the existence of God in his primordial nature. In short, according to the ontological principle, every proof or explanation must somehow be grounded in actual entities which are factors in the becoming of an actual entity. Otherwise, there is no reason for what takes place. Conversely, if there is no reason for an entity or process, the ontological principle has been violated.[66]

Just as the subjective aim is seen to be the final cause of the process of becoming of an actual entity, so also it must function in relation to the entire reality of the actual entity rather than only in relation to some part of the entity. Since the subjective aim does not account for its own actuality,[67] it must be referred to some actual entity as to its reason or explanation. No one of the multiplicity of subjective forms of the data involved in the becoming of an actual entity manifests anything inherent to itself which would account for the synthesis of the many subjective forms, and for the subjective aim.[68]

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[66] Cf. PR, 27, 36, 64-65, 66, 68, 73, 108, 113, 116, 123, 224, 252, 352, 373, 382, 392.

[67] The subjective aim of an actual entity is not itself an actual entity. Thus, it cannot function as a reason for its own actuality.

[68] AI, 328.

The search for a reason for the subjective aim of an actual entity leads Whitehead to assert the existence of God in his primordial nature.

### c. Objectification; objective immortality; everlastingness.

Just as the order of eternal objects seems to be the principal factor involved in the proof for the existence of God in his primordial nature, so also the objectification of temporal actual entities in other actual entities (either temporal or non-temporal) is the best avenue of investigation to establish the existence of God in his consequent nature. If one were to ask Whitehead what he held to be the most basic or fundamental characteristic which could be discovered about an actual entity, he might reply that it is to be a potential for every process of becoming. In fact, he refers to this characteristic as the 'principle of relativity.' He also maintains that every item in the world is involved or implicated in every coming together which constitutes an actual entity, in every concrescence. "It belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming'."[69]

This description of entities may seem to go against what has been already said, concerning the constitution of an entity as a process of becoming.[70]

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[69] PR, 33. "Fourth Category of Explanation." This notion is repeated on PR, 71.

[70] Ibid., 33. "Second Category of Explanation.

Every entity is a subject. To become an object or to be objectified would seem to imply a static conception of the actual entity, directly and immediately opposed to the notion of subjectivity. Whitehead realizes that there are three possible alternatives. Either he asserts that an actual entity is simultaneously subject and object, which conception would involve an inherent contradiction, or else he maintains that there are within the very nature of the entity dual characteristics, capacities for being a subject and an object. He has the third alternative of maintaining that an actual entity cannot possibly be both subject and object, either simultaneously or successively, but that it must be only one of them. He chooses the second alternative as the only one which satisfactorily accounts for an explains his experience. The very becoming of an actual entity is finalized by its becoming an object for another actual entity.

However, in the eighth "Category of Explanation," he maintains that one description is not sufficient to explain an actual entity adequately. Reference must be made both to the process of becoming which is constitutive of an actual entity and to the potentiality of the actual entity for "objectification" in the becoming of some future actual entity. This objectification is the way in which the potentiality of the former entity is realized in the becoming of the latter entity.[71]

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[71] Ibid., 34. "Eighth Category of Explanation."

In losing its status as a subject, an actual entity loses its character of a final cause. Though the actual entity "perpetually perishes," it becomes an efficient cause in the becoming of another actual entity. It acquires objective immortality in that other actual entity.[72] It ceases to become as a subject, and becomes an object for the prehension of some other actual entity. The past actual entity, it is true, is no longer "acting" precisely as subject; it acts as an object. It has not passed out of existence completely; it is "immortal" as an object. It thus transcends itself, and adds to the "real potentiality" of the universe. It has become a component of a present actual entity.[73]

Until an actual entity has attained that definiteness which enables it to become objectified in another actual entity, the former actual entity has within itself a certain feature of incompleteness or indefiniteness. This incompleteness is not a question of a future of the actual entity which has not yet been realized. Rather it is a question of a decision (or decisions) which must be made concerning potentialities to be made definite. The present actual entity is aware

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Cf. also Ibid., 134, where Whitehead says: "The 'objectifications' of the actual entities in the actual world, relative to a definite actual entity constitute the efficient causes out of which that actual entity arises;..."

[72] Ibid., 44.

[73] Ibid., 340.

of this indefiniteness. "In this sense, each actual occasion experiences its own objective immortality."[74]

The past actual entity does not have internal power to determine itself completely, i.e., to remove the indefiniteness for its becoming objectified in another actual entity. This is not an indefiniteness in the formal constitution of the "past" actual entity, because the past actual entity, as past, is completely determined in its formal constitution. Rather, this is a lack of definiteness with respect to the modes of feeling of the new actual entity. What the past actual entity is, has already been decided. The way in which the novel actual entity will prehend the past actual entity has not been decided. The answer to this problem must wait for its solution until the discussion of eternal objects has been presented.

While he does maintain this notion of the present actual entity as the effect arising out of past actual entities as objectified in the present actual entity, Whitehead still points out that past entities are not completely objectified in the present entity. In the reproduction of these past entities, there is abstraction from the totality of their actuality of feeling. "This abstraction is required by the categoreal conditions for compatible synthesis in the novel unity."[75]

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[74] Ibid., 327-328.

[75] Ibid., 364.

In the twelfth "Category of Explanation", Whitehead again considers prehensions, and distinguishes among them, on the basis of acceptance or rejection of the datum of the prehension. There are positive prehensions and negative prehensions. The positive prehensions are accepted as compatible for inclusion into the unity of the prehending subject. Negative prehensions are said to "eliminate from feeling." That is, a negative prehension does not contribute the content of the feeling but only its subjective form. The content of the feeling (the "datum") is held "as inoperative in the progressive concrescence of prehensions constituting the unity of the subject."[76]

Since Whitehead's statement of this point will become even more important in the later discussion of the objective immortality of the temporal actual entities in the consequent nature of God, it is quoted at length here.

> ...All actual entities in the actual world, relatively to a given actual entity as 'subject,' are necessarily 'felt' by that subject, though in general vaguely. An actual entity as felt is said to be 'objectified' for that subject. Only a selection of eternal objects are 'felt' by a given subject, and these eternal objects are then said to have 'ingression' in that subject...[77]

Even negative prehensions contribute to the becoming of an actual entity, by the inclusion of their subjective forms in the entity. Thus every entity

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[76] Ibid., 35.

[77] Ibid., 66.

(both actual and non-actual) has reference to some actual entity, by being prehended by that actual entity (either positively or negatively). As a consequence, the ontological principle is verified.[78]

Whitehead maintains that an actual entity can be present in another entity, not in the sense of being added to that other entity, but in the sense of being objectified in the other entity and prehended by it. This is not a chance happening. In fact, every actual entity must be present in every subsequent actual entity. This is what Whitehead means by the "principle of relativity."[79] The principle of relativity prevents the ontological principle from leading to an extreme doctrine of monism.[80]

There are some additional fundamental notions which should be discussed before turning to a consideration of the reasons why Whitehead is led to introduce the existence of God into his explanation of the reality of experience. These discussions concern the eternal objects and creativity.

### 2. Eternal objects.

The most apparent element in Whitehead's analysis of experience is that of actual entities. There are other entities which must be taken into account, in order to give an adequate explanation of actual entities. These "other" entities, non-actual in character, are the eternal objects.

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[78] Ibid., 66.

[79] Ibid., 79-80.

[80] Ibid., 223-224.

a. Source of the subjective aim of an actual entity; ingression of eternal objects.

In discussing the factors involved in prehension by an actual entity, Whitehead says that the way in which an actual entity feels or prehends the datum of experience is the "subjective form" of that actual entity.[81] According to the sixth "Category of Explanation," it is possible for an actual entity to be involved in the concrescence of another actual entity in one of many different ways. However, the former entity enters into the concrescence of the latter actual entity in only one way.

There is a lack of definiteness with respect to the modes of feeling of the new actual entity. It is removed by the entry of the past entity into the concrescence of the present actual entity. This lack of determination is the "potentiality" of the present entity for being a factor in a future process of becoming. It is a real potentiality, since the lack of determination with respect to the modes of feeling of the new actual entity has been removed by the entry of the past entity into the concrescence.[82] The definiteness or determination of the actual entity is expressed precisely by the ingression of the eternal objects into the actual entity which is in the process of becoming.[83] The eternal objects are the potentialities for definiteness of any actual entity.[84]

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[81] *Ibid.*, 35. "Eleventh Category of Explanation."

[82] *Ibid.*, 34.

Whitehead insists that the eternal objects must exist in order to give intelligibility to "potentiality" and to the quality of "givenness" characteristic of past "actual" entities. Both potentiality and givenness he maintains[85] are meaningless apart from some reference to a realm of many potential entities. The potential entities are the eternal objects. The eternal objects provide a connectedness for the past actual entities, in order that they may enter into the concrescence of a present actual entity.

b. Foundation of novelty; objectification of past actual entities.

Without eternal objects, the past actual entities cannot be transcended by a novel actual entity. "The alternative is a static monistic universe, without unrealized potentialities; since 'potentiality' is then a meaningless term."[86]

Commenting on Whitehead's insistence upon the existence of eternal objects, Leclerc notes that the ontological principle demands that each novel entity arise from unrealized potentiality. There is no significant meaning which can be given to "novelty" without the existence of eternal objects, pure potentials.[87] Although eternal objects are the foundation of novelty for Whitehead, there is no novelty among eternal objects. In other words, they do not undergo a process of becoming.[88]

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[83] *Ibid.*, 44.

[84] *Ibid.*, 63.

[85] *Ibid.*, 72.

[86] *Ibid.*, 72.

The entry of eternal objects into the constitution of an actual entity is termed the "ingression" of the eternal objects. Whitehead speaks of ingression as the way in which an eternal object functions in the process by which an actual entity is self-creative.[89] He also refers to ingression as the manner in which eternal objects are realized in an actual entity, as they contribute something to the definiteness of of that actual entity.[90]

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[87] Leclerc, op. cit., 97. While Leclerc agrees with what Whitehead maintains concerning the necessity of eternal objects in any understanding of reality, there are other commentators on Whitehead, such as C. M. deBoe, who profess to find in Whitehead's explanation of the reality of experience no adequate justification for any such assertion concerning the necessity of eternal objects. Witness the following text:

"...For the fact remains that actual entities explain themselves and our actual world can be explained without anyone's ever knowing of the existence of eternal objects. Eternal objects are nothing more than a useless duplication of actual entities in another world order..." Cornelius M. deBoe, "The Distinction between the Primordial and Consequent Natures of God in the Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton, Princeton University, 1939), 130.

The author leaves it to the reader to make his own evaluation of this comment on Whitehead's system by a careful examination of pertinent texts, such as PR, 131, 367.

[88] PR, 33. "Third Category of Explanation."

[89] Ibid., 38. "Twenty-fourth Category of Explanation."

Not all eternal objects are positively prehended by a concrescing actual entity. However, those eternal objects which are not positively prehended or "felt" by the actual entity in question are not completely irrelevant. They participate in the becoming of the actual entity by the contribution of their subjective form. The definiteness of actual entities can thus be accounted for in a precise manner.[91]

> ...The definiteness of the actual arises from the exclusiveness of eternal objects in their function as determinants. If the actual entity be this, then by the nature of the case it is not that or that. The fact of incompatible alternatives is the ultimate fact in virtue of which there is a definite character...92

c. Determinants of definiteness.

The eternal objects function in two phases in determining the definiteness of the actual entities into which they ingress. They function as potentials for physical feeling and as being pertinent to the data of the prehending actual entity. Considering them as potentials, Whitehead speaks of eternal objects as "lures of feeling." Secondly, the eternal object as a lure for feeling is either accepted into the unity of feeling or else it is rejected.[93]

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[90] Ibid., 34. "Seventh Category of Explanation."

[91] Ibid., 66.

[92] Ibid., 367.

[93] Ibid., 131.

In addition, eternal objects function in two ways in determining the definiteness of actual entities. First, they are forms of definiteness for the datum which is the efficient cause of the present actual entity and which is objectively immortal in this actual entity. Secondly, the eternal objects are determinants of the definiteness of the subjective form of the actual entity. One and the same eternal object can function at once in both these ways.[94] This is necessitated by the second "Categoreal obligation," the "Category of Objective Identity," which asserts that an element in the objective datum of an actual entity cannot appear more than once, as far as the relation of this element to the actual entity is concerned.[95]

Since the eternal objects are determinants of the definiteness of actual entities, according to the ontological principle they have their own actuality in reference to the actual entities into which they ingress. Whitehead speaks of them[96] with some similarity of meaning to the Platonic form.[97] Since an eternal object is a pure potential, Whitehead is able to define it as "any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world..."[98]

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[94] Ibid., 364.

[95] Ibid., 39, 340, 347, 364, 381, 407-428.

[96] Ibid., 70.

[97] Leclerc, op. cit., 20-21, 60, 78, but especially 93, and A. H. Johnson, Whitehead's Theory of Reality. (Boston, Beacon Press, 1952), 121, among other commentators on Whitehead, point to this notion.

Of themselves the eternal objects are not ordered for their ingression into particular actual entities. They acquire relevance and order from their relation to God in his primordial nature.[99] The discussion of the relation of the eternal objects to the primordial nature of God should be deferred until the existence of God in his primordial nature has been established.

### 3. Creativity.

> ...of course, there is no meaning to 'creativity' apart from its 'creatures,' and no meaning to 'God' apart from the creativity and the 'temporal creatures,' and no meaning to the temporal creatures apart from 'creativity' and 'God.'[100]

The reader of Whitehead can grasp with ease the importance which he attaches to the notion of creativity in his explanation of actual entities. Before a person can begin to discuss the existence of God, and its relation to temporal actual entities, he must give considerable attention to Whitehead's account of creativity and its function in the Whiteheadean system.

#### a. Self-creativeness of actual entities.

Whitehead holds that in some manner every philosophy recognizes the self-creative aspect of the beings of human experience.[101] In a number of instances he refers to Spinoza's description of a being as *causa sui*.[102] In being self-creative, every actual entity also helps to fashion the world which transcends it.[103] An actual entity is transcendent in the sense that it is "something individual for its own sake."[104] As self-creative, all actual entities share or exemplify what Whitehead holds to be the most general, the ultimate principle of all reality. Each actual entity is an activity, an individualization of the general activity-Creativity.

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[98] PR, 70.

[99] Ibid., 46.

[100] Ibid., 344.

### b. Creativity as the ultimate principle of Whitehead's philosophy.

Every philosophy holds that there is an ultimate principle in virtue of which all other items gain and maintain their significance. Whitehead asserts that the ultimate is "actual in virtue of its accidents." This ultimate principle is completely empty of any actuality except as it is embodied in these accidents. The philosophy of organism terms this ultimate "creativity."[105]

Reality is characterized both by unity and by multiplicity or diversity. The multiplicity of the universe is unified in the growing together of the various actual entities. What was previously existing in a disjunctive mode now exists in a conjunctive mode. The many actual entities in the past of a given, present, concrescent actual entity, are the disjunctive, multiple aspect of the universe. The concrescent actual entity is the conjunctive unified aspect of the universe. In other words, the many entities are the universe disjunctively; the one entity is the universe conjunctively. Creativity is the ultimate principle by which the disjunctive multiplicity passes over into, i.e., becomes, the conjunctive unity.[106] Not only do the many become one, but the number of "the many" is increased by one, by the concrescence of the present actual entity, which itself passes into the multiplicity, upon completion of its process of becoming.[107]

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[101] *Ibid*., 228.

[102] Cf., among other instances, *PR*, 135, 339.

[103] *Ibid*., 130.

[104] *Ibid*., 135.

[105] *Ibid*., 10, 11.

c. Creativity as characterless.

Creativity is characterized by the creatures which individualize it. Neither can exist apart from the other; creativity is nothing except in the actual entities which are its creatures; the actual entities cannot possibly be, except as individualizations of the fundamental underlying activity which is creativity.[108]

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[106] Ibid., 31.

[107] Ibid., 32.

[108] RM, 91, 92.

There is no definite character which can be ascribed to creativity "in itself," i.e., as distinct from actual entities. The definiteness of an actual entity is due to its forms of definiteness, i.e., to the eternal objects which ingress into it. Beyond these forms of definiteness, there is an ultimate, which cannot be explained by any of the forms, (or by them all taken together). This ultimate principle, which Whitehead calls "creativity," is conditioned by the individual actual entities, which are its creatures.[109]

At one point, Whitehead compares creativity to Aristotelian "prime matter." He says that creativity and prime matter are alike since each is without a character of its own. However, creativity is not characterized as a passive receptivity for form. Creativity cannot be characterized precisely because every characterization is more special than creativity. Nonetheless Whitehead maintains that creativity is always discovered in experience as conditioned, and is spoken of in experience as conditioned, because it cannot be discovered or described in any other manner.[110]

Whitehead distinguishes between the kind of reality which eternal objects have and that accorded to creativity.[111] Creativity is not an entity in the same manner in which actual occasions and eternal objects are entities. It is an ultimate principle, which he refers to as the "general activity," which is common to all reality, and which is particularized in every occasion of actuality.

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[109] PR, 30.

[110] Ibid., 46-47.

[111] SMW, 255.

d. Creativity as the principle of novelty.

Since every actual entity is a particularization of creativity, and since novel actual entities "become" in the world, creativity is the principle of novelty in the universe. An actual entity is different from every other actual entity. Novelty is introduced into the multiplicity of actual occasions by the concrescence of the novel actual entity. Whitehead speaks of the "doctrine of the creative advance," and refers to creativity as the origination or source of each and every novel situation.[112] In the creative advance, an actual entity is capable of individualizing and characterizing creativity in its own mode or way.[113]

There is a definite order among the many entities of the temporal universe. This is a fact of experience. But order by itself, without novelty, is static and dead. Something more than order is necessary for a dynamic universe. What is needed is the combination of order and novelty, brought about by the dual influence of the eternal objects and creativity.

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[112] PR, 31-32.

[113] Ibid., 324.

Novelty is necessary in order to avoid useless and murderous repetition. Order is necessary as a safeguard against chaos, and to provide a pattern for development in a dynamic universe.[114]

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine carefully the opinions of others on Whitehead's notion of creativity, even though such an investigation would prove enlightening. There has been a first-rate study conducted on this topic by Rev. Walter L. Stokes, S. J.[115]

### E. Influences on Whitehead concerning God.

Now that the principal elements in Whitehead's philosophy of organism have been briefly developed, the author will turn to a consideration of the points on which Whitehead's notion of God has been significantly influenced by his predecessors. This will be done in order to give illumination to the reason why Whitehead proceeded in the way in which he did in the unfolding of his realistic "natural theology." One must ever keep in mind the fact that Whitehead never intended to write a separate treatise on God. But he did come to a realization that it is necessary to introduce the primordial and consequent natures of God, in order to complete the description of the reality of direct and immediate experience.

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[114] *Ibid.*, 515.

[115] "The Function of Creativity in the Metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis, Saint Louis University, 1960), ch. 5.

1. Pre-note on the meaning of influence.

In an article considering the influence upon Whitehead by some of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries, Victor Lowe maintains that:

> ..."Influence" means influence. Its assertion requires evidence that something more than a sympathetic appreciation occurred. It requires evidence that some of Whitehead's problems and doctrines are more likely to have come to him from the alleged influencer than from any other source--including his own originative power--which a careful study of his life and his works can suggest. Very little evidence of this sort has been produced.116

This opinion about influences on Whitehead is certainly not the more popular one.[117] However, in his study of Whitehead's doctrine on reality, A. H. Johnson prefaces his chapter on "Whitehead's Relation to Other Philosophers" with remarks quite similar in tone to those of Lowe.[118] Lowe is trying to point out that similarities between the thought of two men should not be taken immediately to mean that one man had a direct influence on the other. However, Lowe does not intend to deny the influences which Whitehead specifically acknowledges in several places in his writings.

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[116] "The Influence of Bergson, James, and Alexander on Whitehead," The Journal of the History of Ideas, X, no. 2 (April, 1949), 267-296. (The quote is from p. 294.)

[117] Lowe is the first to admit this fact. Cf. Ibid., p. 269. But this article was published before A. H. Johnson's book.

[118] A. H. Johnson, op. cit., 119-120.

The opinion of Lowe and Johnson seems to be the more realistic approach, when one considers the influences on Whitehead's notion of God. To compare without a real ground for comparison is almost to philosophize without evidence. In either case, what is gained is indeed tenuous.

On the other hand, where really discernable relationships and influences of one man upon another are present--such as the influence of Parmenides and Heraclitus upon Plato--much is to be gained toward the understanding of all concerned by a study of such influences. The author maintains that there are some real cases of influence upon Whitehead's notion of God, and he intends to point them out in the present section. The readers are referred to the article by Lowe for a full discussion of the question of influences upon Whitehead's thinking.

## 2. Plato.

Whitehead holds that God in his primordial nature orders the eternal objects as lures for feeling. This he accomplishes as the source of the subjective aim of actual entities. It is precisely this notion in which Whitehead has been significantly influenced by Plato. Whitehead speaks of the relation of the eternal order to the temporal order. The items of the eternal order participate in those of the temporal order. This is just the reverse of the relationship between the Platonic world of Forms and the realm of sensible experience.

However, there is the difficulty that the eternal order is not actual, and the corresponding difficulty that the actual order is not eternal. Some entity is needed to combine the two orders of reality. Whitehead speaks of the being which accomplishes this combination as the embodiment of an "ideal realization of potentialities," which orders the eternal objects for their ingression into actual entities, and which transforms the disjunction of multiplicity into the conjunction of unity.[119]

Whitehead maintains that in the Platonic system, there is a fundamental or basic soul, which is Plato's "Supreme Craftsman," whose "active grasp of ideas conditions the whole process of the universe" and "on whom depends that degree of orderliness which the world exhibits.[120] He goes on to maintain that for Plato the influence which the Supreme Craftsman has upon the world is an influence of persuasion rather than of force. He cannot produce order in the world, where it is impossible that order be produced. Whitehead also speaks of order in the Timaeus as linked closely with the creation of the world.[121] In another instance, he refers to the Platonic position that creation is the victory of persuasion over force.[122] This theme will recur in the discussion of Whitehead's treatment of God in Religion in the Making, in the present chapter.

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[119] PR, 63-64.

[120] AI, 189.

[121] PR, 147.

## 3. Aristotle.

No student of the philosophy of organism would say that Whitehead was simply an Aristotelian. If a person were in doubt, he ought to consult the many instances in which Whitehead explicitly rejects the Aristotelian notion of substance-quality, and its embodiment in the subject-predicate mode of expression.[123] But Whitehead recognizes the ability which was Aristotle's and pays him a sincere "metaphysical compliment"[124] when he says:

> ...In the first place if we are to accord to anyone the position of the greatest metaphysician, having regard to genius of insight, to general equipment in knowledge and to the stimulus of his metaphysical ancestry, we must choose Aristotle...;[125]

The principal influences which Aristotle exerted upon Whitehead regarding the problem of God concern the ontological principle. In one of the places in which Whitehead discusses the ontological principle, he points out that by asserting the existence of God in his primordial nature as the orderer of eternal objects, a person is likewise maintaining the Aristotelian principle that "apart from things that are actual, there is nothing--nothing either in fact or in efficacy."[126]

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[122] AI, 31.

[123] Cf. PR, 45, 79-80, 81, 93, among other places in which Whitehead discusses this Aristotelian doctrine.

[124] SMW, 258.

[125] Ibid., 242.

Aristotle held that any explanation of the reality of experience must begin with actual entities, and that any beings introduced in order to explain this experience must be actual entities or somehow referable to actual entities. An explanation cannot be introduced unless it is required by the general character of reality. According to Whitehead, Aristotle followed this general norm, and was the last great Western philosopher to do so. Though Whitehead rejects the eminent reality of Aristotle's prime mover,[127] he still maintains that the explanation of experience which he is attempting to advance can be solved only in a fashion analogous to the way in which Aristotle approached the problem.[128]

In the final chapter of Process and Reality, Whitehead speaks of the primordial nature of God as the lure for feeling.[129] He refers to the Metaphysics, where Aristotle speaks of the Prime Mover, in a passage which Whitehead feels is analogous to his own viewpoint.[130] Aristotle describes the Prime Mover as "a mover which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality." This indicates a notion similar to Whitehead's notion of the primordial nature of God. If one takes into account both Whitehead's rejection of the Aristotelian notion of substance and his own admission of the similarity of the Prime Mover to the primordial nature of God, then there seems to be discernible a decided influence of Aristotle upon Whitehead.

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[126] PR, 64. This notion can be found in Aristotle, Metaphysics, IX, 6-8, 1048 a 25 - 1051 a 4. Leclerc cites this influence and treats it on page 21 of his Whitehead's Metaphysics.

[127] PR, 519; SMW, 249-250.

[128] SMW, 250.

[129] PR, 522-523.

### 4. The influence of F. H. Bradley.

In many places in Process and Reality, Whitehead to the philosophical work of F. H. Bradley, and points to similarities between his own position and that of Bradley.[131] In fact, Whitehead asserts: "Finally, though throughout the main body of the work I am in sharp disagreement with Bradley, the final outcome is after all not so greatly different."[132]

In discussing the existence of God in his primordial nature, Whitehead makes use of the ontological principle. This principle is fundamental to the proof for God's existence. He says that the only reasons are actual entities. When a person is searching for a reason, (e.g., the reason why eternal objects are ordered for ingression into concrescing actual entities) he is searching for one or more actual entities as the explanation of the reality of his experience.[133]

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[130] IX, 9, 1072 a 23-32.

[131] PR, vii, viii, 69, 85, 237, 281, 289, 304, 389.

[132] Ibid., vii.

Whitehead's ontological principle bears a good deal of similarity to a notion which Bradley expresses in the chapter in Essays on Truth and Reality, entitled "On Floating Ideas and the Imaginary."[134] Bradley maintains that there is no such thing as an idea which floats "absolutely." Every idea essentially is a qualification of some reality. There is no idea which is not in some way related to something which is real, as a qualification of that something. "But every idea, used as an idea, must so far attach itself as an adjective to the real, and hence in the end there will be no such thing as an idea which merely, i.e., absolutely, floats."[135]

The position which Bradley is opposing is one which asserts that "reality is identified with the world of actual fact, and outside of this world floats the unsubstantial realm of the imaginary...."[136]

An idea does qualify reality, is an adjective applied to some reality. There is no idea which is not at least this. It is possible to assert that there are "floating ideas," but this statement must be properly understood. An idea which does not qualify one part of reality does qualify another part. Bradley does not limit his notion of reality to what he calls "any special world."[137] There is always some part of reality which is qualified by a particular idea. His position is well summarized in the following paragraph:

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[133] Ibid., 37.

[134] (London, Oxford University Press, 1950), 28-64.

[135] Ibid., 29.

[136] Ibid., 30.

> Every possible idea therefore may be said to be used existentially, for every possible idea qualifies and is true of a real world. And the number of real worlds, in a word, is indefinite. Every idea therefore in a sense is true, and is true of reality. The question with every idea is how far and in what sense it is true. The question is always whether, qualifying reality in one sense, the idea qualifies reality in another sense also. For, true in one world, an idea may be false in another world, and still more false if you seek to make it true of the Universe.[138]

A student of Whitehead's philosophy can see in this position of F. H. Bradley something quite akin to Whitehead's ontological principle. Whereas Bradley maintains that there is no such thing as a merely floating idea, Whitehead holds that no eternal object can have any meaning for ingression into concrescing actual entities, apart from the ordering which God in his primordial nature ("this primordial valuation of pure potentials") imparts to eternal objects. The only alternative, he suggests, is a complete separation and disjunction of unrealized eternal objects in regard to the temporal order. The relation of eternal objects to novelty would be meaningless. As a matter of fact, novelty would be inconceivable.[139]

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[137] _Ibid_., 34.

[138] _Ibid_., 42.

Thus, no eternal object is capable of ingression into any temporal actual entity unless it is ordered for such ingression. No eternal object can "float" into the temporal world from nowhere.[140] Whereas Bradley would assert that no idea can "float absolutely," but that an idea can "float relatively," i.e., an idea might not qualify one real world, but it would qualify another real world, Whitehead would maintain that no eternal object could be completely unordered for ingression into concrescent temporal actual entities, but that a particular eternal object might not ingress positively into each and every temporal actual entity.[141]

In no text does Whitehead explicitly say that he has been influenced in the formulation of the ontological principle by Bradley's essay, "On Floating Ideas and the Imaginary."[142] However, it is not difficult to notice the strong similarities in emphasis between Bradley's position on floating ideas and Whitehead's notion that eternal objects must be ordered, in order to be "apt" for ingression into concrescing actual entities. What is most remarkable about the similarity is the fact that a radically realistic principle, as the ontological principle manifests itself to be, should have arisen--even in part--from the influence of a fundamentally idealistic position, that of F. H. Bradley.

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[139] PR, 64.

[140] Ibid., 108.

[141] Cf. the texts which deal with negative prehension, such as PR, 35, 66, 128, 162, 338-360, 362, 524.

[142] Loc. cit.

There are other people who have influenced Whitehead on various points of his organic philosophy. However, the author has not been able to find other positive influences upon Whitehead's thought concerning the existence and natures of God. He shares the opinion of Victor Lowe, expressed in the article previously cited:

> I trust that we shall in the future find out more fully the possible influences to which Whitehead was exposed. But the outlook for proofs of actual influences by his contemporaries or near-contemporaries (or his predecessors, for that matter) is, I conclude, not promising--unless new written material should turn up...[143]

## F. Development of Whitehead's Thought concerning God.

### 1. Principal sources.

The principal sources for Whitehead's doctrine on the existence and natures of God are the following works: Science and the Modern World, Religion in the Making, and Process and Reality. Whitehead does discuss God in Adventures of Ideas and in Modes of Thought. The pertinent texts in these two works will be treated in subsequent chapters of this dissertation. There will immediately be a brief discussion of the general treatment which Whitehead accords to God in each of the three main works.

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[143] Lowe, 295-296.

2. Discussion of God in Science and the Modern World.

It has been noted that any proof for the existence of God must really follow the lead of Aristotle, and deal only with the beings of experience, actual entities, and with those items which are derived from and referable to actual entities.[144] This notion is repeated in Process and Reality (cf. Whitehead's discussions of the "ontological principle"), and is fundamental to Whitehead's whole philosophy. In other words, a proof for the existence of God is not valid, unless the general character of reality demands that the existence of God be admitted. If the consideration of actual entities demands that there be a being such as men call God, then and only then is it licit to introduce this being into the philosophical scheme. Whitehead is very careful on this point. He would maintain that no principle can be introduced, neither Creativity nor the eternal objects, nor God, if the principle is not demanded by the metaphysical situation.

The main "proof" which Whitehead offers for the existence of God in Science and the Modern World is one based on the limitation of the modes of the general activity. Whitehead refers to creativity by the term

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[144] SMW, 249-250.

"general activity," and to actual entities by the term "modes of the general activity," in order to disignate the actual entities as attributes of creativity. Every mode of the general activity is limited.[145] There must be a principle of the limitation of the modes of the general activity. This principle of limitation must itself be an attribute of the general activity. Since this principle is the source and ground of all reason and rationality, no reason can be given for it. This principle of limitation is God.[146]

Every actual entity by the fact that it is actual is thereby limited. This might seem to be an ordinary fact of Whitehead's philosophical system, but it is of extreme importance. It follows from this principle that if an actual entity is introduced to explain the reality of experience, then this item will be limited. The ontological principle, introduced in Process and Reality, asserts in one of its forms that all reason and explanation must be derived from, and referable to, some actual entity. To introduce God in an explanation of experience is to assert that God is limited. The only alternative is to admit that the ontological principle is violated, by maintaining that some of the reality of experience is not ultimately referable to an actual entity.[147]

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[145] Ibid., 255-256.

[146] Ibid., 257.

[147] PR, 108.

The significance of such a position is not hard to grasp. If one agrees with Whitehead, then it would seem to be impossible to assert the existence of a God Who is a transcendent creator, the First Cause of the beings of the world of experience. Whitehead realizes this and in Process and Reality, he will embrace this consequence of his earlier position.

Whitehead links maturity of religious vision with adventure of the spirit. He holds that God's power is in the worship which he inspires. As the source of order in nature, God never uses force, only persuasion. To identify God and power would be to bring forth every possible reaction of rejection on the part of human critics.[148] A religion is strong when it is able to help men to comprehend the divine vision which is the order of the world.[149] This notion is similar to that which Whitehead expresses in Process and Reality[150] when he refers to God as the lure for feeling, the orderer of eternal objects.

3. Discussion of God in Religion in the Making.

In Religion in the Making, Whitehead points out three principal meanings which have been given to God throughout the course of history. There is the notion which the people of eastern Asia possess, that of an impersonal order to which the world conforms. This is the world ordering itself. It is not the situation in which the world is held to obey a rule which has been imposed. This is a rather extreme doctrine of immanence. According to the notion of God maintained by the people of Eastern Asia, "when we speak of God we are saying something about the world."[151] Whitehead distinguishes this position from pantheism by pointing out that "they invert each other...according to the latter concept, when we speak of the world we are saying something about God."[152]

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[148] SMW, 274.

[149] Ibid., 276.

[150] PR, 522.

There is also the Semitic notion of "a definite personal individual entity, whose existence is the one ultimate metaphysical fact, absolute and underivative, and who decreed and ordered the derivative existence which we call the actual world."[153] According to Whitehead, this notion expresses an extreme doctrine of transcendence.

Finally, there is the Pantheistic concept, which maintains that the world is unreal apart from God, and that the reality of the world is an aspect of God's reality. Whitehead observed what can readily be seen by any person, namely that the pantheistic doctrine is also necessarily a monism.[154]

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[151] RM, 69.

[152] Ibid., 69.

[153] Ibid., 68.

[154] Ibid., 69. Whitehead simply maintains that

Whitehead rejects the Semitic concept of a transcendent God for two reasons. First of all, the Semitic God is outside of the "actual world," since it is transcendent in a sense which Whitehead will not allow to the actual entities of the world. By rejecting this concept, Whitehead does not mean to deny that such a being exists. Rather, he maintains that the Semitic God is outside any metaphysical conditions.[155]

Another objection which Whitehead raises to the Semitic concept of God is that it cannot be proved. The only real proof for it would seem to be the "ontological argument" of Saint Anselm and Descartes, which asserts that from the concept of such a transcendent being, one is able to infer its existence. However, Whitehead points out that most philosophers since the time of Descartes have rejected the ontological argument as invalid. In support of his contention, Whitehead cites Cardinal Mercier's _Manual of Scholastic Philosophy_.[156]

Whitehead thinks that in the Semitic notion there is no real connection between the world of experience and God. Since the Semitic God lacks the mutual

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Pantheism is the extreme doctrine of monism. At this point, he does not assert that every pantheism is a monism, though it seems impossible to have a pantheism which is not a monism.

[155] _Ibid_., 70. Cf. also _Ibid_., 86-87.

[156] _Ibid_., 70.

dependence upon all actual entities which Whitehead would ascribe to the God of the world of experience, (i.e., the God of the philosophy of organism), he thinks that the only approach to the Semitic God is through the invalid ontological argument.[157]

In Science and the Modern World, Whitehead has pointed out that only those items may be admitted in any explanation of experience which are demanded by the total metaphysical situation.[158] The same idea is brought up in Religion in the Making, in a discussion of what human beings can know about the existence of God. Whitehead admits that man can know all the elements or factors which are required in order to explain the total metaphysical situation. On the other hand, a person cannot discover anything which is outside of the entire complex of actual fact, and which is yet held to be explanatory of this complex of fact.[159]

Any philosophical investigation of reality must begin with the beings of immediate experience. An investigation of this kind cannot go beyond the actuality of the world. It can discover, however, all the factors which are present in the actual world as experienced. From this, Whitehead concludes that it is possible to discover a God who is immanent in the world, but not a God who transcends completely the world of experience.[160]

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[157] This observation on Whitehead's understanding of the Semitic concept of God is very carefully expounded by Professor James Collins in God in Modern Philosophy (Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1959), 316.

[158] SMW, 249-250.

[159] RM, 70.

Whitehead's God is immanent, but is not the God of the eastern Asiatics. Nor is he the God of the pantheistic monists. To embrace a doctrine of pantheism would be, for Whitehead, to cut off any further possibility of proceeding on rational grounds in the investigation of experience. Any such investigation would degenerate into a battle of emotions. "...If you make a religious experience to be the direct intuition of a personal being substrate to the universe, there is no widespread basis of agreement to appeal to."[161]

Whitehead treats what he holds to be the formative elements of the actual world, i.e., those items which he holds to be demanded by the "total metaphysical situation." Among these he mentions creativity from which the beings of the actual world derive their temporal passage into novelty. There is also the realm of ideal forms, themselves non-actual, which are exemplified in all actual entities. Finally he mentions:

> ...The actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmitted into a determinate freedom. This non-temporal actual entity is what men call God--the supreme God of rationalized religion.162

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[160] *Ibid.*, 70.

[161] *Ibid.*, 64.

[162] *Ibid.*, 90.

This is God in his primordial nature. The notion is presented similarly to the way in which Whitehead describes the primordial nature of God as the principle of concretion in Process and Reality.

As one of the formative elements in the actual world, God is the source of order and of determination. Whitehead believes all order to be at its roots aesthetic order, rather than cognitive or conceptual order as Kant believed.[163] He maintains that the moral order is simply an aspect of the aesthetic order. The actual world contains aesthetic order, derived from the source of all order present in the world--God in his primordial nature.[164]

God is an actual entity. He enters into every phase in the creation of the actual world, by his ordering of the eternal objects. He is above change, since as the source of the order in the universe, he undergoes no succession or perishing, but rather is eternal. Since God is above change, he cannot be subject to any internal inconsistency. Thus God is not evil, since he lacks the primary note or characteristic of evil, namely internal inconsistency. As actual, God certainly includes within his own nature a synthesis of the entire universe, both of the realm of forms and of the world of actual entities. In relation to all change, God remains self-consistent, and is thus free from transition. This discussion appears to parallel Whitehead's treatment of the primordial and consequent natures of God in Process and Reality.[165]

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[163] Cf. Critique of Pure Reason, passim. Translated by N. K. Smith. (London, Macmillan and Company, 1958).

[164] RM, 104-105. Whitehead never uses the term "the primordial nature of God" in Religion in the Making, but a careful examination of this text reveals a notion identical with some of his descriptions of the primordial nature of God in Process and Reality.

At any time, the entities of the actual world can be viewed as a definite limited fact. This fact, which is in process, and which has derived itself from creativity, needs an entity already actual, "as an antecedent for the entry of the ideal forms into the definite process of the temporal world."[166] Quite clearly, such a being would be God in his primordial nature.

Though God is actual and the entities in the process of realization (for which God is the antecedent ground) are actual, God is different from these other actual entities in his mode of origin.[167] This is what Whitehead will later describe (in Process and Reality) as the origin of God from his conceptual pole and the origin of a temporal actual entity from its physical pole. In the language of prehension, this means that a conceptual prehension has as its object an eternal object, whereas a physical prehension has as its object an actual entity.

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[165] Ibid., 98-99.

[166] Ibid., 152.

[167] Ibid., 152-153.

Whitehead points out that the nature of God is "the complete conceptual realization of the realm of ideal forms."[168] This means that the primordial nature of God is constituted by God's vision of the eternal objects.

Whitehead maintains as a fundamental principle of the philosophy of organism that to be actual is to be limited. To be actual is to unify the various elements of the universe through prehensions of them. In *Religion in the Making*, Whitehead uses the term "perception" rather than prehension, but the signification is the same.[169] By being actual, God is something definite and good. It is his actuality of goodness which makes God limited. If he were not limited, i.e., if he were infinite, then God would be the source of evil as well as the source of good. In order to exclude evil from God, Whitehead admits that God is finite.[170]

### 4. Discussion of God in *Process and Reality*.

In *Process and Reality* there is *no radical departure* from the position set down in the earlier works. There is an *expansion and* a *development* along more systematic lines. For instance, where the earlier works referred to the natures of God in a number of ways, *Process and Reality* treats of the three-fold character of God as an actual entity, and discusses the primordial nature, the consequent nature, and the superject nature.[171] The superject nature of God is not discussed prior to the treatment it receives in this work.

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[168] *Ibid.*, 154.

[169] *Ibid.*, 150-151.

[170] *Ibid.*, 153.

Whitehead speaks of God's nature as "dipolar."[172] This refers to the fact that God has both a conceptual pole and a physical pole, that he has both conceptual and physical feelings. God's conceptual pole is his primordial nature and God's physical pole is his consequent nature.

The contrast between God and the temporal actual entities is clearly delineated. One of the ways of pointing to this contrast is in regard to their respective origins. God originates from his conceptual pole, and his physical pole is derived from his prehensions. of temporal actual entities. God's conceptual pole is constituted by his vision of the eternal objects. A temporal actual entity originates from its physical pole, from its prehensions of other actual entities. Its conceptual pole is consequent upon its physical pole. In God, "permanence is primordial and flux is derivative from the World: in the World's nature, flux is primordial and permanence is derivative from God.[173]

Whitehead is firm in his insistence on the plurality of actual entities present in experience. He maintains that there is nothing more real than an actual entity, that God is an actual entity, and that any real thing is an actual entity, no matter how insignificant it may be.[174]

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[171] Cf. for instance, PR, 134-135.

[172] Ibid., 524.

[173] Ibid., 524.

God is the same kind of being as other actual entities. Whitehead makes an exception to this by stating that God is "primordial." Yet God is generically the same as other actual entities. Whitehead compares his own position with that of Descartes, who in Whitehead's estimate, maintained that God's existence is generically different from the existence of other actual entities.[175]

It is evident that Whitehead is holding that a univocity, and not an analogy, exists between God and other actual entities. "God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification."[176] Whitehead never specifically treats the problem of analogy. If a person agrees with Whitehead and admits that univocity rather than analogy is the relation which exists between God and other actual entities, then it is indeed impossible to argue to the existence of a transcendent God.

Both Science and the Modern World and Religion in the Making contain a proof for the existence of God in his primordial nature.[177] However, neither of these two works contain a proof for the existence of God in his consequent nature. Very little discussion of the consequent nature of God is contained in either work. Process and Reality is an advance over the other two works, since it contains a discussion of both the primordial and the consequent natures of God, as well as proofs for the existence of God in both his primordial and consequent natures. It is admitted, by Whitehead[178] and by the author, that Process and Reality does not contain any formal proofs in the scholastic notion of this term. But proofs can be set down by a consideration of the principles of Whitehead's philosophy of organism. In other words, it can be shown why Whitehead is led to admit that God exists both in his primordial nature and in his consequent nature.

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[174] Ibid., 27-28.

[175] Ibid., 116.

[176] Ibid., 521.

The principal avenue of investigation for the existence of God in his primordial nature is the ontological principle.[179] That of the existence of God in his consequent nature is the principle of relativity, which is intimately linked to the ontological principle.[180] According to Whitehead's general notion of philosophic method, every investigation must begin with the actual entities of experience. Any other method of approach cannot be philosophic for Whitehead. It must be dealing with abstractions. Since the investigation must start from the beings of experience, there cannot be a proof for the existence of God starting from creativity or from eternal objects, but only from actual entities, __if__ such a proof is called for by the "total metaphysical situation." There can be but one proof for the existence of God in his primordial nature, and but one proof for the existence of God in his consequent nature, though these proofs can be presented under different formalities. Once the existence of God has been established, then a discussion can be initiated about the relation of God to creativity and eternal objects. This is just the method of investigation and procedure which this dissertation will follow.

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[177] SMW, 250-257; RM, 151-153.

[178] PR, 521.

[179] Ibid., 26, 36, 48, 64, 65, 66, 68, 73, 108, 113, 116, 123, 224, 252, 352, 373, 382, 392.

[180] Cf. Ibid., 43, 76, 79, 224, 226, 532.

# CHAPTER II

## THE PRIMORDIAL NATURE OF GOD

### A. The Question of "Proof."

1. The limitation of all metaphysical investigation.

Where would one begin a "proof" for the existence of God in his primordial nature? More precisely, where would one look to find a reason why it is necessary to introduce God into the explanation of reality? To put it another way, what leads an investigator of reality to assert the existence of something such as God in his primordial nature?

What Whitehead is trying to do in his philosophy is to give or set up "a coherent, logical, necessary system of ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted."[1] Philosophy should aim to be an explanation of the reality of experience. It should strive to give order, coherence, and meaning to the experience which is presented to the investigator. Any proof for the existence of God has to realize two goods in order to be successful. It must achieve for the system of ideas an adequate grasp of eternal objects for the interpretation of experience. It must achieve for the system of ideas an adequate grasp of eternal objects for the interpretation of experience. It must also avoid what Whitehead calls the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness."

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[1] PR, 4.

Every actual entity exemplifies certain categories of thought and reality. It is true that these categories can be applied to this or that actual entity; but it is not always true that these categories are found in all actual entities. The fallacy of "misplaced concreteness" consists in assuming--in the absence of a sufficient amount of evidence--that these categories are to be found in every actual entity, when they are true of only a part of reality.[2]

Whitehead is convinced that metaphysics deals with the analysis of experience.[3] After pointing to the connection of metaphysics to "practice," and to the need for the testing and verification of metaphysics by comparing it with "practice," Whitehead makes the following statement: "No metaphysical system can hope entirely to satisfy these pragmatic tests. At the best such a system will remain only an approximation to the general truths which are sought."[4]

Whitehead expresses doubt that "pure" metaphysical concepts have ever been formulated. He has in mind metaphysical notions which are applicable to each and every actual entity in this era or epoch and in every other epoch. He maintains that man has to confine himself to a consideration of those laws which are most general in their applicability, i.e., those laws which apply for the greatest number of actual entities, which are valid for the present cosmic epoch.[5]

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[2] Ibid., 11. Whitehead discusses the "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness" at length in Science and the Modern World, ch. III.

[3] Cf. ch. I, section B 2, of this dissertation; cf. also PR, 19-20 and RM, 84.

[4] PR, 19.

### 2. This limitation as applied to the investigation concerning the existence of God in his primordial nature.

The proof for the existence of God in his primordial nature must fit into the metaphysical description of experience. If it does not do this, then it cannot be considered a valid investigation. When the "proof" fails to do this, it is not properly metaphysical; it needs to be revised, because it is inadequate. The description of God in his primordial nature cannot be complete since:

> ...no language can be anything but elliptical, requiring a leap of the imagination to understand its meaning in its relevance to immediate experience. The position of metaphysics in the development of culture cannot be understood without remembering that no verbal statement is the adequate expression of a proposition.[6]

The proof for the existence of God in his primordial nature will be limited by this restriction which Whitehead places on metaphysical investigation. In other words, an investigator must strive to discover things applicable to every actual entity. If he _discovers_ a reference of every actual entity to the primordial nature of God, then he can _assert_ such a connection or reference. However, since Whitehead sees a limitation on the applicability of the laws which are currently generalized, to the extent that they may have to be revised, then one cannot be absolutely certain that what he discovers about God in his primordial nature will be all that can be discovered about that nature of God. Such a generalization as: "Actual entities bear a reference to the primordial nature of God," may be true for the present cosmic epoch, but the laws which can be discovered about man's direct experience are in reality cosmological laws rather than metaphysical laws; and thus, they _may be_ subject to revision in a future cosmic epoch.[7]

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[5] *Ibid*., 138-139.

[6] *Ibid*., 19, 20. The quote is taken from p. 20.

Any investigation must begin with experience, with those elements in experience which are constant, or at least those elements which are most general. Whitehead realizes, of course, that it very well may not be possible to find elements in experience which are common to absolutely every actual entity. However, this does not mean that a man should make no attempt to formulate metaphysical laws or generalizations. Man needs metaphysics to provide a way of thinking and an ordering of all his activities.[8]

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[7] _Ibid._, 139.

[8] _AI_, 163, 164.

The investigation of the existence of God in his primordial nature must aim at the highest generality. If Whitehead introduces God in order to account for the reality of the "beings" of his immediate experience, it must be because he sees that such a step is necessary, one which will adequately express a characteristic of what he has discovered in reality. Again, one must realize the ever-present limitation on the investigation. What is true of one cosmic epoch _may not be_ true of another cosmic epoch.[9]

In spite of what has been said about the relation of metaphysical and cosmological laws, Whitehead would not regard as doubtful that the primordial nature of God is properly metaphysical. This is, to be sure, always a problem in Whitehead. It is hard to establish that Whitehead ever seriously supposed that what he regarded as the foundation of _all_ cosmic order whatsoever--that without which no temporal actual entities of any sort at all could exist--could only be a temporary characteristic of this cosmic epoch.

The primordial nature of God is genuinely metaphysical.[10] The primordial nature of God is the ground of all order.[11] If a new cosmic order were to come to pass, an epoch or world reality in which the constitutive elements were of a radically different sort from those of the present epoch, there would have to be some basis for this new epoch. The only alternative is complete chaos and unintelligibility. In order to account for or ground such an order, the primordial nature of God would be required. It is on this basis that Whitehead can argue that the primordial nature of God is genuinely metaphysical, rather than simply cosmological in its scope.

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[9] _PR_, 138-139, 302.

[10] _RM_, 84, n. 1.

[11] _PR_, 64.

3. Actual entities and the ontological principle.

Whitehead is quite clear on this point. He holds that "actual entities are the only reasons."[12] Thus, if one is led to assert the existence of God in his primordial nature, or in his consequent nature for that matter, ultimately it will be because of something necessary to the explanation of the reality of the actual entities of his experience here and now. For this reason, any investigation of the existence of God must begin with a consideration of actual entities, because actual entities are constitutive of reality. Whitehead speaks of them as "the final real things of which the world is made up."[13] There is certainly nothing more real than an actual entity. Though there are differences among them, and though some actual entities are more important, more complex and highly developed than others, there is no difference among them as far as the principles of reality are concerned, which they all exemplify, each in its own way. Actual entities are dependent upon one another. They are the final reasons for an explanation of the reality of experience which may be present to the observer, to the reflective man and the unreflective man alike. To seek an explanation of reality in some "being" which is not an actual entity is to go beyond the evidence, to become quite literally "unrealistic." In order to provide for a total explanation of reality, even eternal objects and creativity must be referred to actual entities.[14]

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[12] This is another way of stating the "ontological principle" enunciated and explained in the Eighteenth Category of Explanation.

[13] PR, 27.

### 4. Whitehead and proof in "traditional" natural theology.

Whitehead never expressly tries to "prove" the existence of God, either in his primordial nature or in his consequent nature. Rather, he maintains that any discussion of God at all must be called for by the context of the experience which the investigator is attempting to explain. What is required by the metaphysical situation? Is God required by the metaphysical situation? If so, then one should begin such a discussion, but it should not be undertaken simply because of religious reasons or prejudices. "There is nothing here in the nature of proof."[15] There exists only the experience of the investigator which stands in need of some rational explanation. From this it is easy to see that

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[14] *Ibid.*, 27-28.

[15] *Ibid.*, 521.

Whitehead is not trying to formulate a natural theology, which is "traditional" in any ordinary sense of the term. If one wishes to call an investigation traditional because it treats the same questions that have been treated by previous philosophers, or because some of its conclusions are similar in tone and intent to what other men have previously said, then Whitehead would be willing to admit that his so-called natural theology is "traditional."

It seems more likely that Whitehead's consideration of the existence of God, both in his primordial nature and in his consequent nature, is traditional only in the sense that, in common with certain other philosophers, it is realistic, and that he allows the philosophical explanation of reality to be led wherever the evidence of immediate experience cares to lead. However, Whitehead's discussion of the existence of God is certainly unlike other investigations of God in many ways. For instance, what Whitehead means by God is radically different from what other men have meant by God. For most natural theologians, God is infinite. However, for Whitehead there is a real sense in which God is literally finite and dependent.[16]

Traditional natural theology begins its investigation of the existence of God with creatures, with the beings of our direct and immediate experience, and concludes to the existence of a being not a creature, not in direct and immediate experience, and not interdependent upon the many other beings of the world. Rather, the conclusion of traditional natural theology is the existence of a Being Who is the Cause of all the beings of direct and immediate experience. The beings which are caused by this First Cause are analogously similar to the First Cause.[17] On the other hand, Whitehead's God is not the total cause of all the other actual entities of the world; he is interdependent upon them and they upon him. This follows from Whitehead's Fourth Category of Explanation, the "principle of relativity."[18] Whitehead certainly does not have an analogous conception of God. It is a rigidly univocal notion. That this is so can be seen from texts such as the following: "In the first place, God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification."[19]

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[16] *Ibid.*, 11.

A few observations might be in order here. For God to be real he must be an actual entity. Whitehead admits that God is an actual entity. However, like other actual entities, God must be limited, finite, imperfect. It is in his consequent nature that God is finite. To conclude to a God who is transcendent and perfect, according to Whitehead, might be good or satisfying from a religious point-of-view, but from a metaphysical vantage point, it is a weak position. For Whitehead, God is transcended by other realities, by other actual entities.

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[17] Maurice R. Holloway, S.J., _An Introduction to Natural Theology_. (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), cc. 1 and 4, _passim_.

[18] _PR_, 33.

[19] _Ibid._, 521.

The passage quoted above from PR, 521, should be held close at hand, throughout Whitehead's entire discussion of the existence and natures of God. It is a point on which a great deal of the evaluation of Whitehead's whole doctrine on God must rest. It is also a point on which a lapse on Whitehead's part will mean the collapse of the consistency of his notion concerning the existence and natures of God.

### B. Evidence from Experience.

#### 1. Actual entities and change.

One of the fundamental points in Whitehead's philosophy of organism is that the actual world is a process, and that the process of the actual world is one which is at the very heart of actual entities. It is constitutive of them.[20] This process of becoming is the way in which an actual entity undergoes a transition from one stage to another. The actual entity is nothing apart from the process. It is not an enduring subject of change, which becomes different than it was. However, for Whitehead, to become different is not for a numerically identical actual entity to change. The actual entity which becomes is the subject which experiences. Simultaneously the actual entity is the end-product or result or "superject" of the process of becoming.[21]

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[20] Ibid., 33.

It is not sufficient to say simply that actual entities change or that they do not change, that the primordial nature of God is necessary to account for the becoming of an actual entity. To become different, for Whitehead, is always to become different from another. It never is to become different from oneself, because there is no "self" from which an actual entity can become different. This latter alternative is impossible and meaningless in Whitehead's understanding of reality.

One should investigate the question of whether all change is impossible in Whitehead's system, or whether he will admit the possibility and the existence of certain types of change, as understood in an Aristotelian context. Then one can see whether God in his primordial nature is a ncessary and integral part of the understanding of Whitehead's explanation of reality.

The entire Aristotelian notion of change is based on an analysis of beings as different after the "process" from what they were before the "process" took place, and on a resolution of the Parmenides-Heraclitus dilemma in terms of act and potency. In this context, there must be some continuity between the way the being exists before the change and the way it exists after the change, and yet it is necessary for the being to be different afterwards from what it previously was. In addition, there must be an enduring subject, which is common to both terms of the change, in order to ground the continuity which is essential to change. And yet, that by which the terms of the change differ cannot be identical with that enduring subject which grounds the continuity of the change, lest the result be a simple substitution of one being for another rather than a change.[22]

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[21] Ibid., 43.

Whitehead admits the existence of two types of "fluency." Whether these types of fluency are identical with, or closely similar to, either type of change in the Aristotelian explanation of reality must now be investigated. The first kind of fluency is that which constitutes the growing-together, the "concrescence" of the actual entity. The second type of fluency is the passage from one particular existent to another particular existent. To this type of fluency Whitehead gives the obvious name of "transition."

> 'Concrescence' is the name for the process in which the universe of many things acquires an individual unity in a determinate regulation of each item of the 'many' to its subordination in the constitution of the novel 'one.'[23]
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> ...The creativity in virtue of which any relative complete actual world is, by the nature of things, the datum for a new concrescence, is termed 'transition.' Thus, by reason of transi-

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[22] Rev. George P. Klubertanz, S.J., Introduction to the Philosophy of Being. (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), ch. IV, *passim*.

[23] PR, 321.

> tion, 'the actual world' is always a relative term, and refers to that basis of presupposed actual occasions which is a datum for the novel concrescence.[24]

Concrescence leads to transition, and transition, in turn, leads to a new process of concrescence. A process within one actual entity is a process of concrescence, while a process from one actual entity to another is one of transition. Concrescence is more concerned with final causality, with movement toward the subjective aim of the actual entity in question, which is the final cause of that actual entity. On the other hand, the process of 'transition' enables the data of immortal actual entities to act as efficient cause of the present actual entity.[25]

The process of concrescence is "microscopic," while the process of transition is "macroscopic." The latter process is the passage from the world at large to the world in particular. The former process is the fluency or passage from one stage of the actual entity to another, more developed stage of that same actual entity.[26]

In an Aristotelian explanation of the reality of direct and immediate experience, substantial change occurs whenever there is a passage from potency to act, in which the common subject of the change--primary matter--takes on a new substantial form, a new principle of specific determination or perfection. The end result of such a change is a new individual being, and usually a being of a kind different from that of the being at the outset of the change. In Whitehead's system, the process of transition does involve the coming-into-being of a new individual, the succession of one entity by another entity. However, at first glance, it is not quite clear that this process is the process referred to in Aristotelian terminology as "substantial change." The question needs further study.

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[24] Ibid., 322.

[25] Ibid., 320.

[26] Ibid., 326-327.

One of the strongest statements which Whitehead makes concerning the question of change in actual entities is the following:

> ...It is impossible to attribute 'change' to any actual entity. Every actual entity is what it is, and is with its definite status in the universe, determined by its internal relations to other actual entities. 'Change' is the description of the adventures of eternal objects in the evolving universe of actual things.[27]

Change may be a factor in the Whiteheadean universe, but it is certain that for Whitehead change is nowhere near the Aristotelian notion of a continuous process of becoming. Thus, it is possible to see, even in Whitehead's own words, a contention that actual entities do not undergo change as continuous subjects of a process of becoming. Whitehead will not admit the requisistes of the Aristotelian notion of change. He says: "Thus an actual entity never moves: it is where it is and what it is."[28]

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[27] *Ibid.*, 92.

[28] *Ibid.*, 113.

> ...The error does not consist in the employment of the word 'substance'; but in the employment of the notion of an actual entity which is characterized by essential qualities, and remains numerically one amidst the changes of accidental relations and of accidental qualities. The contrary doctrine is that an actual entity never changes, and that it is the outcome of whatever can be ascribed to it in the way of quality or relationship. There then remain two alternatives for philosophy: (i) a monistic universe with the illusion of change; and (ii) a pluralistic universe in which 'change' means the diversities among the actual entities which belong to some one society of a definite type.[29] (Italics mine.)

It is easy to see that Whitehead is denying that in this process or fluency, there is anything resembling the common subject of change, which lies at the heart of the Aristotelian explanation of transition from potency to act. If there is nothing which "remains numerically one" throughout the process, then there certainly can be no actual entity which functions as the ground for the continuity of such a process.

There is even a passage in Process and Reality in which Whitehead denies that there is any continuity in the "process of becoming," which constitutes the change itself.

> ...There is becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming. The actual occasions are the creatures which become, and they constitute a continuously extensive world. In other words, extensiveness becomes, but 'becoming' itself is not extensive.[30]

When Whitehead makes the assertions he does in the preceding paragraph, how is it possible to maintain any further that change in its Aristotelian sense is a reality in his explanation of experience, when it is obvious that he is side-stepping one of the fundamental requisites of Aristotelian change, i.e., the continuity of the initial stage of the change with the terminal stage of the change? This continuity is a requisite only from the point-of-view of Aristotle. Whitehead does not deny the existence of change in another sense--such as the fact of difference in successive actual entities.

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[29] Ibid., 122-123.

[30] Ibid., 53.

It is impossible for Whitehead to admit any continuity of becoming in an actual entity, because the subjective aim of the actual entity, which governs the coming-together, the coming-to-be, the "concrescence," of that actual entity does not share or participate in the divisibility of the extensiveness of the _res vera_. Witness the passage in which Whitehead discusses the relationship obtaining between the actual entity and becoming on the one hand and the ontological principle on the other.

> ...The concrescence is dominated by a subjective aim which essentially concerns the creature as a final superject. This subjective aim is the subject itself determining its own self-creation as one creature. Thus the subjective aim does not share in this divisibility. If we confine attention to prehensions concerned with the earlier half, their subjective forms have arisen from nothing. For the subjective aim which belongs to the whole is now excluded. Thus the evolution of subjective form could not be referred to any actuality. The ontological principle has been violated. Something has floated into the world from nowhere.[31]

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[31] _Ibid._, 108.

It can be discovered from these texts that Whitehead definitely would deny, and does deny, that change, in any Aristotelian understanding of the term, is possible in the universe. The discussion of change in the pages just past is far from complete. For instance, no mention was made of the ultimate subject of process or fluency in Whitehead's philosophy. Passages in _Science and the Modern World_ would suggest that it is creativity.[32] And these would be buttressed with similar quotations from _Process and Reality_. However, since this investigation is concerned primarily with Whitehead's notions on God rather than with his understanding of change, we must now turn to a consideration of the relation which actual entities in the process of becoming have to God's primordial nature, and must save any further comments on Whitehead's doctrine concerning change for the general evaluation at the end of the dissertation.

### 2. Principle of concretion.

Though for an actual entity to become is not for it to change, this process does involve the coming-to-be of a new mode of existing for the entity which undergoes the process. From the first "Category of Explanation," Whitehead asserts that for an actual entity to become is for it to undergo a creative advance into novelty.[33]

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[32] 247-248.

[33] _PR_, 42.

Now the way in which the various actual entities achieve this creative advance into novelty is important for Whitehead and for an understanding of why he introduces the existence of God in his primordial nature. Actual entities divide or break off portions of the extensive continuum. The extensive continuum provides a basis for relatedness among actual entities. Just what is the extensive continuum? Whitehead says that:

> ...An extensive continuum is a complex of entities united by the various allied relationships of whole to part, and of overlapping so as to possess common parts, and of contact, and of other ralationships derived from these primary relationships.[34]

The extensive continuum expresses possible relationships which may obtain among the various actual entities. It does not say or indicate that one relationship will exist between an actual entity and one of its successors rather than another such relationship. It simply maintains that there are certain possible relationships which can exist between two entities.

There is reality in the extensive continuum; but it is not a reality prior to the actual world. It is in the actual world. The extensive continuum is the very first determination and specification of order in the actual world of direct and immediate experience. The extensive continuum determines real potentiality which takes its rise from the general character of the world. The continuum is real because it is inextricably linked to the entities of the actual world. Because of the relationships of the extensive continuum, all actual entities are related to one another. Any future actual entities will necessarily be associated and linked--in their very origin--with the extensive continuum. The reality of the extensive continuum consists in "the reality of what is potential, in its character of a real component of what is actual."[35]

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[34] *Ibid.*, 103.

Whitehead exhorts his readers to keep in mind the distinction between the actual and the potential. Failure to do this has been the major flow of the previous centure. "Continuity concerns what is potential; whereas actuality is incurably atomic."[36] This is in harmony with what Whitehead has said previously, concerning continuity and becoming, namely, that there is a "becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming."[37]

"Actual entities atomize the extensive continuum."[38] In the extensive continuum, not every potentiality is suitable for prehension in every actual entity. Some potentialities are contrarily opposed to each other. It is only in the concrescing actual entity that the various potentialities have been ordered for prehension. Each actual entity stands in relation to the other actual entities, because of the relationship set up through the extensive continuum. Each actual entity is in the extensive continuum and can thus be referred to as being "somewhere in the continuum." On the other hand, since every actual entity contains and includes the continuum through the inclusion of its own objectifications of the actual world, it is true to say that every actual entity is everywhere throughout the extensive continuum. In addition, every actual entity, in its potentialities for objectification in subsequent actual entities, plays a part in constituting the extensive continuum for any such subsequent concrescing actual entities.[39]

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 95.

[37] Ibid., 53.

[38] Ibid., 104.

In its process of concrescence, each actual entity adopts a standpoint from which it "views" the extensive continuum, a point from which the extensive continuum is atomized. One might say that each actual entity has adopted a "region" of the continuum, and that the entity has a "regional" viewpoint. But the question arises as to which region of the mere extensive continuum, which part, shall be cut off and atomized by each actual entity. In the extensive continuum itself there is no principle which will determine the region to be broken off or atomized to form data for the concrescence of an actual entity.[40]

It is the subjective aim of the actual entity which gives the entity the determination necessary to initiate the process of concrescence. What provides the subjective aim of the actual entity, at least in the initial stage, which enables the actual entity, itself, to grow together? Whitehead maintains that the initial stage of the subjective aim of an actual entity is derived from the primordial nature of God. The primordial nature of God is the source of all novelty, the "being" already actual and yet non-temporal, the means by which the mere extensive continuum, with its contrary potentialities, is broken up into regions or atomized and made relevant and ordered for the concrescence of a particular actual entity. The exposition of the way in which God in his primordial nature effects this ordering of certain regions of the extensive continuum for concrescence in actual entities must wait for its unfolding until the conclusion of the discussion of the primordial nature of God as the source of the subjective aim of concrescing temporal actual entities.

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[39] Ibid., 104-105.

[40] Ibid., 104.

### 3. Source of the subjective aim.

An analysis of the actual entities of experience would reveal certain elements, or factors, at work, relative to the process of concrescence or becoming. These factors are the eternal objects and creativity. They were briefly discussed in the first chapter, and it is not the intent of the author to enter here into a lengthy discussion of them. However, there are certain things which can be observed about actual entities and their relation to creativity and to eternal objects, which are important in showing why Whitehead introduces the existence of God in his primordial nature in order to explain the reality of his experience.

Every actual entity is self-creative. Whitehead is very explicit on this point. The actual entity is the product of past actual entities, which are the efficient cause(s) of the present actual entity, but it is also a novel concrescence.

> ...An actual entity is at once the product of the efficient past, and is also, in Spinoza's phrase, *causa sui*. Every philosophy recognizes, in some form or other, this factor of self-causation, in what it takes to be ultimate fact.[41]

One aspect of the actual entity which is closely connected with the fact that every actual entity is self-creative is the subjective aim. This subjective aim governs the process of becoming which is constitutive of the actual entity. The subjective aim is that aspect of an actual entity by which it determines itself as a unity of one creature. In a concrescing actual entity, the multiplicity of data are unified by the process of becoming. This unity is the unity of the subjective aim of the actual entity.[42]

The subjective aim unifies both the physical prehensions and conceptual prehensions of an actual entity. If the subjective aim were concerned with only the physical prehensions or feelings of the temporal actual entity, there would be no reason to explain the later origin of conceptual prehensions in the concrescing actual entity.[43]

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[41] *Ibid.*, 228.

[42] *Ibid.*, 37.

The subjective aim is the final cause of the process of becoming in any actual entity. It is the "subject itself determining its own self-creation as one creature."[44] Every actual entity aims to achieve a unity from the multiplicity of "data" which are present to it in the process of concrescence. The subjective aim must also function in relation to the whole reality of the actual entity, instead of in relation to only a part or portion of such an entity. It is impossible that the subjective aim of an actual entity account for its own actuality, because the subjective aim is not itself an actual entity. Thus, it cannot function as a reason for its own actuality. "This ontological principle means that actual entities are the only reasons; so that to search for a reason is to search for one or more actual entities."[45]

Thus, the subjective aim of an actual entity must be referred to some actual entity for an explanation, since it does not account for its own actuality. Whitehead tells his readers that the ontological principle is limited by the autonomy of the subjective aim. This seems to be the radical aspect (of every actual entity) of causa sui. But there is a sense in which Whitehead can say that the initial stage of the subjective aim (of an actual entity) is inherited from the primordial nature of God.

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[43] Ibid., 108.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 37.

> ...In another sense the subjective aim limits the ontological principle by its own autonomy. But the initial stage of its aim is an endowment which the subject inherits from the inevitable ordering of things, conceptually realized in the nature of God. The immediacy of the concrescent subject is constituted by its living aim at its own self-constitution. Thus the initial stage of the aim is rooted in the nature of God, and its completion depends on the self-causation of the subject-superject.[46]

None of the many subjective forms of the data which are felt by the concrescing actual entity can account for their being felt by this particular actual entity, rather than not being felt by it, rather than not being data for the concrescence of this entity. Nor do any of these subjective forms of the felt data have anything to offer in explanation of the subjective aim of the concrescent actual entity. To say that the subjective forms of a concrescing actual entity are not actual entities is not to deny that they are real. They are indeed real potentialities for ingression.[47] However, there must be an actual entity from which every temporal actual entity receives its subjective aim, or which can account for or explain the origin of the initial stage of the subjective aim of a concrescent actual entity. This actual entity is God.[48]

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[46] Ibid., 373.

[47] Ibid., 33.

[48] Ibid., 374.

This is the road which leads Whitehead to assert the existence of God in his primordial nature, but the account is not yet complete.

### 4. Creative order demands the primordial nature of God.

Why is the primordial nature of God the source of the initial stage of the subjective aim of concrescing temporal actual entities? This brief answer could be given: because the primordial nature of God is the source of all order in the universe. However, such an answer will not be intelligible until a discussion of the primordial nature of God as the source of order has been undertaken.

An actual entity does not undergo a process of becoming which is haphazard. An actual entity becomes in a very definite way. It becomes something rather than nothing. The data which form the past of any given actual entity determine what it will become. Not every actual entity is relevant as a datum for the becoming of a present actual entity. The "subjective form" of the actual entity describes the way in which the past entities are included as data for the present concrescing actual entity.[49]

The process which constitutes the becoming of a present actual entity is a unification of the many relevant entities in the past of a present entity. It is a "concrescence," a growing together of the many past actual entities into one present, actual entity. By referring to this process as a concrescence, Whitehead points to the fact that the many entities are now really unified in the present actual entity. Before the process of concrescence, the many entities (the "data") were only potentially unified in the present entity; they were able to be unified, but they were not actually unified in one entity. To show that there has been a unification of many entities in one entity, Whitehead says that the present actual entity is "the real concrescence of many potentials."[50]

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[49] NL, 27.

The primordial nature of God is the source of the order in the various processes of concrescence in the temporal actual entities. The order and novelty which are actualized through the primordial nature of God are instruments of the subjective aim of God.[51]

In God's primordial nature, there is an aim toward order in the universe, which aim is valuation. Here order means: "'society' permissive of actualities with patterned intensity of feeling arising from adjusted contrasts..."[52] It is in this context that the primordial nature of God is to be understood as the principle of concretion. Temporal actual entities receive from the primordial nature of God the initial subjective aim from which the process of concrescence, of self-causation, of the temporal actual entity originates. The subjective aim of the concrescing actual entity determines the ordering and relevance of eternal objects as data for conceptual prehensions.

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[50] PR, 33. "Second Category of Explanation."

[51] Ibid., 135.

[52] Ibid., 373-374.

The primordial nature of God is the instrument by which there is effected a transition of creativity from an actual world (the world constituted by the "data" of the present actual entity) to the novel concrescing actual entity. God orders all the eternal objects according to their relevance for ingression into the present actual entity and thus makes a determination among the various possibilities for the initial subjective form of the concrescing temporal actual entity. This is the way in which the temporal actual entity is constituted in its primary stage as a concrescing subject with its two-fold make-up of physical and mental poles, each necessary for the actual entity, and each inseparable from the other.[53]

The actual entities of the world of direct experience manifest and exemplify the ingression of other entities. The other entities are the potentialities for the definiteness of the present temporal actual entities. "The things which are temporal arise by their participation in the things which are eternal."[54] The answer to the question concerning the possibility of unifying the temporal actual order and the eternal potential order is furnished by an entity which "combines the actuality of what is temporal with the timelessness of what is potential."[55]

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[53] *Ibid.*, 374.

[54] *Ibid.*, 63.

It is through the primordial nature of God that the eternal objects obtain ideal realization. This ideal realization of the eternal objects provides the stability by which the concrescence of temporal actual entities exemplifies the most general metaphysical characteristics, and by which these same temporal actual entities are able to attain the satisfaction proper to, and in accord with, the subjective aim of each actual entity, Without such an ordering of eternal objects for ingression into temporal actual entities, there would be a complete separation or disjunction among the many eternal objects, and thus, it would be impossible for these eternal objects to ingress into the temporal actual entities. The result would be the impossibility of novelty in the realm of temporal actual entities.[56]

If those entities which are not yet realized in the temporal order, (i.e., unrealized eternal objects) are to be relevant for ingression into subsequent temporal actual entities, the metaphysical situation demands the existence of a non-temporal actual entity, in which unrealized eternal objects are made relevant for such ingression. There can be only one entity which in its conceptual pole is not derived from prehensions of other actual entities. The primordial nature of God achieves the conceptual valuation of eternal objects. The creative order depends on this ordering, and upon anything which accounts for this ordering. Thus, the creative order, which is the order of actual entities in the world of experience, depends on the primordial nature of God, because the eternal objects depend on the primordial nature of God. This ordering of eternal objects is what gives these eternal objects relevance for ingression into temporal actual entities, whereas they would not otherwise have such relevance. The primordial nature of God is the source of relevance for eternal objects.[57] It is the factor in the world which allows the assertion that pure chaos in the universe is unintelligible.[58]

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[55] Ibid., 64.

[56] Ibid.

### C. Relation of the Primordial Nature of God to Eternal Objects.

Eternal objects play an important part in the reality of the universe. They are directly involved in the concrescence of every actual entity, and they bear a very strong relation to the primordial nature of God. It is therefore necessary that the relationship between the primordial nature of God and eternal objects be investigated.

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[57] *Ibid.*, 48.

[58] *Ibid.*, 169.

This segment of the investigation will involve four phases. First of all, a few remarks are in order concerning eternal objects as the determinants of definiteness in the processes of concrescence of temporal actual entities. Next, the ordering of the eternal objects for their ingression into temporal actual entities will be treated, and it will be found that the primordial nature of God is necessary in order to give a complete account of this ordering. A subsequent discussion will consider the primordial nature of God as the location or "home" of possibility. Finally, it will be necessary to investigate the metaphysical status of those eternal objects which have not ingressed into actual entities. Upon the completion of these considerations, one will be able to turn to the relationship between the primordial nature of God and creativity.

1. Eternal objects as determinants of definiteness.

Whitehead has pointed out that the analysis of an actual entity reveals within that entity a lack of definiteness with respect to the modes of ingression into which that actual entity can enter, in its aspect of being "objectified," or objectively immortal. He knows that every being contains within its very nature a potential for entering into future processes of becoming.[59] The lack of definiteness is avoided, or rather removed, by the entry of objectified actual entities into a subsequent actual entity. This lack of definiteness within a present temporal actual entity highlights the potentiality of the entity for being a factor in a process of becoming.[60]

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[59] Ibid., 33.

The question then arises concerning the way in which this lack of definiteness in present actual entities is removed. The determination of a subsequent actual entity, the removal of indefiniteness in present actual entities, is brought about precisely by the ingression of eternal objects into the subsequent actual entity. The eternal objects are the potentialities of definiteness of the subsequent concrescing actual entity; and the subsequent actual entity manifests the ingression of these eternal objects and the objective immortality of the present actual entities. The temporal and eternal orders are intimately linked.[61]

The permanent element in the organic explanation of reality is form. Actual occasions are not indefinite in regard to their 'formal' constitution. The potentiality of the disjunctive multiplicity of actual entities has passed into the unity of realization in the present actual entity. On the other hand, eternal objects--in their very nature--involve a certain amount of indefiniteness and indecision. Eternal objects share with all other entities, both actual and potential, the characteristic of being a potential for processes of becoming. Also, the ingression of eternal objects into concrescing actual entities manifests and expresses the definiteness of these actual entities. But in their very nature, eternal objects do not show or point to the actual entities into which they will ingress, the actualities in which the potentiality (of the eternal objects) will be realized. Thus, there is a real sense in which one can say that eternal objects are more indeterminate than actual entities are. Actual entities are "devoid of all indetermination" in their formal constitution, whereas eternal objects do have such indetermination within their very nature.[62]

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[60] Ibid., 34.

[61] Ibid., 44.

Without these eternal objects, it would be impossible to understand how past actual entities are connected, in preparation for their entry as "data" into the concrescence of a present actual entity. Without eternal objects, novelty is impossible. The process of becoming of an actual entity is dipolar, and is constituted by the ingression or

> ...influx of eternal objects into a novel determinateness of feelings which absorbs the actual world into a novel actuality.
>
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> It is evident that 'givenness' and 'potentiality' are both meaningless apart from a multiplicity of potential entities. These potentialities are the 'eternal objects.' Apart from 'potentiality' and 'givenness,' there can be no nexus of actual things in process of supersession by novel actual things....[63]

Though eternal objects are involved in the account of the novelty in actual entities, there is no such thing as a novel eternal object. In other words, though an actual entity undergoes a process of becoming, in fact, though the reality of an actual entity is constituted by the very process of becoming, eternal objects do not undergo a process of becoming.[64]

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[62] Ibid., 44.

[63] Ibid., 72.

By "ingression," used in reference to an eternal object, Whitehead means the manner in which the eternal object is realized in an actual entity, the way in which the eternal object contributes something toward making the actual entity definite.[65] The eternal objects, as Whitehead points out, function as determinants of the definiteness of actual entities. They function as potentials for the physical feeling of actual entities, and are "lures for feeling" in the actual entities.[66] The eternal objects are forms of definiteness for the past actual entities which constitute the "data" of the present actual entity, which data are the efficient causes of the present actual entity. In addition, eternal objects are determinates of definiteness of the subjective form of the present actual entity.[67]

2. The ordering of eternal objects for ingression.

Of themselves, the eternal objects do not have any particular order in regard to their ingression into an actual entity.[68] At any one moment some eternal objects will have been prehended by temporal actual entities, and others will not have been so prehended. There must be a reason why eternal objects do ingress into actual entities in precisely the way in which they do, and this reason must in some way bear a reference to an actual entity, as is required by the ontological principle.[69]

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[64] Ibid., 33. "Third Category of Explanation."

[65] Ibid., 34. "Seventh Category of Explanation."

[66] Ibid., 131.

[67] Ibid., 364.

At one point Whitehead expresses the ontological principle in the following terms: "All real togetherness is togetherness in the formal constitution of an actuality."[70] Now if there are eternal objects which are relevant to actual entities, but which are as yet unrealized by these actual entities in their concrescent processes of becoming, then these eternal objects must somehow be unified in a non-temporal actual entity, since there is no temporal actual entity to which the unrealized eternal objects can be referred, precisely because they are unrealized. All relevance is expressive of a real fact of togetherness among forms. The relation of eternal objects to a non-temporal actuality which provides a basis for the relevance of these eternal objects to concrescing temporal actual entities was referred to in discussing the primordial nature of God as the foundation of order.

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[68] Ibid., 44.

[69] Ibid., 37.

[70] Ibid., 48.

According to the principle of relativity, there can be only one actual entity, not derived from or conditioned by, prehension of an actual world. Such a being, like every other actual entity, is a superject of creativity. However, this being is primordial, (i.e., underived from physical prehensions), in its origin of prehensions of eternal objects. This primordial actual entity brings about "the complete conceptual valuation of eternal objects." The valuation of eternal objects in this primordial actual entity is what gives relevance to eternal objects for their ingression into actual entities. This entity is God in his primordial nature.[71]

The conceptual prehension of the eternal objects constitutes the primordial nature of God. It is in God's primordial nature that the eternal objects achieve their ideal realization as potentialities. Their ideal realization in the primordial nature of God grounds the metaphysical order by which the eternal objects are relevant for ingression into the various concrescent actual entities. Thus, the indetermination inherent in the very nature of eternal objects is removed.[72]

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[71] *Ibid*.

[72] *Ibid*., 64.

### 3. The primordial nature of God as the "home of possibility."

Whitehead makes another statement of the ontological principle when he says, "Everything must be somewhere; and here 'somewhere' means 'some actual entity.'"[73] Thus, if anything is to have reality or significance, or even intelligibility, it must be ultimately referable to some actual entity. Whitehead sometimes speaks of the eternal objects as the "general potentiality of the universe." If eternal objects are going to have any reality, significance, or intelligibility, they too must be referred to some actual entity. The general potentiality of the universe must be somewhere. This location or "home" of eternal objects is the primordial nature of God. The primordial nature of God is demanded at this point, because not all eternal objects have ingressed into concrescing temporal actual entities, and there must be some actual entity to which these unrealized eternal objects can be referred. Whitehead knows this to be true because of the ontological principle. If the eternal objects were not referred to some actual entity, there would be no reason for them. They would then be utterly unintelligible. But since they have not been prehended by any concrescing temporal actual entity, the actual entity to which they are referred must be a non-temporal actual entity. Such an actual entity is the primordial nature of God.

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[73] *Ibid.*, 73.

One might object that unrealized eternal objects need not be referred to any actual entity, such as God in his primordial nature, because they are not related to temporal actual entities. If this position be maintained, then the ontological principle is violated, since, as was noted earlier, "everything must be somewhere." In addition, Whitehead makes the following assertion: "Accordingly the general potentiality of the universe must be somewhere; since *it retains its proximate relevance to actual entities for which it is unrealized*...[74] (Italics mine.)

In commenting on Whitehead's relating of the primordial nature of God to the eternal objects, Charles Hartshorne notes that Whitehead's argument for the existence of God in his primordial nature is similar to the traditional argument from contingent being to necessary being, with one notable exception. According to Hartshorne, Whitehead's position is that the existence of God in his primordial nature is necessary in order to account for real possibility.

> ...there is a primordial power *whose non-existence is not a possibility*, *since possibility presupposes its existence*. Its reality being the ground of alternatives, its non-reality is not an alternative....[75]

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[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Idea of God," *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*. P. A. Schilpp, ed. (New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1951), 537.

Hartshorne goes on to maintain that in his primordial nature God is not completely necessary, but that there is at least one aspect of his primordial nature which is necessary, in order that there be a ground for real possibility, a home for eternal objects, which ground cannot not be.[76]

### 4. Epistemological consideration on the background of Whitehead's treatment of the existence of God in his primordial nature.

When he was faced with the question of explaining the origin of concepts of ideal possibilities which had never been realized, which had never ingressed into actual entities, Whitehead could have turned to the fifth Categoreal Obligation which states:

> (v) The Category of Conceptual Reversion. There is secondary origination of conceptual feelings with data which are partially identical with, and partially diverse from, the eternal objects forming the data in the first phase of the mental pole. The diversity is a relevant diversity determined by the subjective aim.[77]

However, instead of taking this option, Whitehead solves the problem by introducing God in his primordial nature.[78]

Whitehead has the possibility of asserting at this point that conceptual knowledge is in no way dependent upon sense considered as physical prehension. This is really the position of Plato. Whitehead refuses to accept this position because it would entail a controversion of the ontological principle.[79]

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[76] Ibid.

[77] PR, 40.

[78] Ibid., 73.

To be divine is to have conceptual feelings that are not physically originated. To be temporal is to originate from another actual entity. In the text cited below, Whitehead discusses the way in which temporal actual entities prehend God by means of physical prehensions.

> The question, how, and in what sense, one unrealized eternal object can be more, or less, proximate to an eternal object in realized ingression--that is to say, in comparison with any other unfelt eternal object--is left unanswered by this category of reversion. In conformity with the ontological principle, this question can be answered only by reference to some actual entity. Every eternal object has entered into the conceptual feelings of God. Thus a more fundamental account must ascribe the reverted conceptual feeling in a temporal subject to its conceptual feeling derived, according to Category IV, from the hybrid physical feelings of the relevancies conceptually ordered in God's experience. In this way, by the recognition of God's characterization of the creative act, a more complete rational explanation is attained. The category of reversion is then abolished; and Hume's principle of the derivation of conceptual experience from physical experience remains without any exception. 80

Whitehead maintains that the Category of Conceptual Reversion only gives an answer within the limits of the world of temporal actual entities. A more adequate account of the relation between realized eternal objects and unrealized eternal objects must transcend the limits of the temporal world. This more complete account would note that every temporal actual entity derives its reverted conceptual feeling from its hybrid physical prehension of the primordial nature of God, of the eternal objects relevant for ingression into this particular temporal actual entity, which eternal objects are made relevant through God's conceptual prehension of them in his primordial nature.

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[79] Ibid., 343, 377.

[80] Ibid., 381-382.

Whitehead asserts that the Category of Conceptual Reversion does not of itself account for the relative proximity of an unrealized eternal object to a realized eternal object. But this difficulty can be superseded by reference to the primordial nature of God, which is the very line of pursuit that Whitehead follows. When one realizes that actual entities can prehend--by a hybrid physical prehension of feeling of God--these ordered data or complex patterns of eternal objects, he can see why it is possible for Whitehead to abandon the Category of Conceptual Reversion.

The existence of God in his primordial nature is necessary from an epistemological point-of-view because of the ontological principle, which in this application requires that in its origin, every temporal actual entity prehend another entity--which is both actual and is the orderer of the eternal objects. Physical prehension of ideal possibilities is required, which leads to an actual entity which is the determinant of ideal possibility for other actual entities. These ideas or ideal possibilities cannot be experienced, unless they are experienced in physical prehensions. Thus the actual entities in time, in prehending God, are prehending an eternal entity.

### D. The Relation of the Primordial Nature of God to Creativity.

#### 1. Determinant of creativity.

Whitehead is quite explicit in treating the relation of God to creativity. God is the "primordial, non-temporal accident" of creativity.[81] This means that God in his primordial nature is a determinant of creativity, that there are no other actual entities prior to the primordial nature of God, and that the primordial nature of God does not derive any feeling from other actual entities, precisely because it is underived in its very "nature."

It is obvious that for Whitehead every actual entity, including God, is a creature of creativity. In addition, every actual entity conditions and determines creativity. Creativity is not something in itself, actual and real apart from its many embodiments or "accidents." Every actual entity transmits to creativity a definiteness of character which "mere creativity lacks."[82]

There is an intimate link among God, creativity, and temporal actual entities. God is the first instance of creativity, and he is the primordial condition which qualifies creativity, prior to its qualification by any temporal actual entities. Just as the primordial nature of God is necessary in order to ground the relevance of eternal objects for their ingression into temporal actual entities, so also the primordial nature of God is required by, and intimately linked with, creativity, because the very ordering of the eternal objects in the primordial nature of God is a matter of fact, which conditions creativity.[83] God is the "actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmuted into a determinate freedom..."[84]

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[81] Ibid., 11.

[82] Ibid., 47. Cf. also RM, 157-158.

The primordial nature of God is one part of a three-fold realization of creativity. The other portions are the temporal actual entities and the consequent nature of God. God's primordial nature is "the one infinite conceptual realization." This characterization can be compared to the way in which Whitehead refers to temporal actual entities as "the multiple solidarity of free physical realizations in the temporal world. It can also be compared to the manner in which the consequent nature of God is described in the same passage: "the ultimate unity of the multiplicity of actual fact with the primordial conceptual fact."[85]

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[83] PR, 46.

[84] RM, 90.

[85] PR, 525.

Actual entities give character or definiteness to characterless creativity. God in his primordial nature gives or transmits his eternal primordial character to creativity. Actual entitites, God included, have the job or function of characterizing creativity. In this entire discussion, there can be no meaning in "God himself" or in "actual entities themselves" or in "creativity itself." None of these items have any meaning apart from all the rest. God is as necessary for creativity as creativity is for him. Temporal actual entities are as necessary for creativity as creativity is for them.[86]

Whereas all temporal actual entities presuppose the primordial nature of God, the primordial nature of God presupposes no other actual entities. This is precisely what is signified by designating this part of God's nature as "primordial." The primordial nature of God does presuppose creativity, the general metaphysical notion of the creative advance, of which God is the first underived example. In the primordial nature of God, creativity acquires a primordial character.

2. Creature of creativity as causa sui.

Although each and every actual entity is a determinant, a qualification, a characterization, of creativity, all actual entities, including God, are creatures of creativity. Creativity is conditioned by every one of its creatures. Thus, though creativity is actual only through the various actual entities which embody it, still these actual entities are the creatures of creativity.[87]

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[86] Ibid., 344.

Creativity is fundamental to Whitehead's entire explanation of reality. It is a notion of the highest metaphysical generality. It is at the foundation of all actual entities. However, creativity does not have a characterization of its own, because all characterizations are more specialized than creativity itself is. Creativity is always discovered in experience as characterized and is described in this way. God in his primordial nature shares with other actual entities the characteristic of being a creature of creativity and a condition for creativity.[88]

On the one hand, every actual entity (including God) is an individual actual entity in its own right. In being an individual in its own right, an actual entity transcends the rest of actuality. On the other hand, each and every actual entity is transcended by the fundamental aspect of reality, the characterless creativity, which every actual entity characterizes and qualifies. Thus, every actual entity is a creature of creativity.[89]

Every actual entity without exception, as a creature of creativity, is causa sui, and exemplifies the creative advance of nature. God is causa sui in respect to his primordial nature. Temporal actual entities are such because of the second element in their nature. In this manner, both temporal actual entities and God fulfill Spinoza's definition of substance as causa sui.[90]

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[87] Ibid., 30.

[88] Ibid., 47.

[89] Ibid., 135.

For an actual entity to be causa sui means that the process which is constitutive of an actual entity, (i.e., the process of concrescence), is its own reason why the actual entity "decides" in the way in which it does decide, with regard to its various feelings. Each actual entity bears within itself the sole responsibility for any decision regarding the admittance of a lure for feeling as a causally efficient factor in the process of concrescence itself. This element of self-causation in every actual entity is the foundation of all freedom in the universe.[91]

According to the account given by the philosophy of organism, efficient causality is exercised in the transition from one actual entity to another actual entity. On the other hand, final causality is discovered within the actual entity itself, in the process of concrescence by which the actual entity realizes itself. There are two "becomings" involved here. There is the becoming of the given, the datum, which causal process is efficient in nature. There is also the becoming of the actual entity itself, arising from the datum, which causal process is final in nature. The actual entity is both the result of the past, the result of a past which is efficient in its causal influence upon the present actual entity, and also is causa sui. "Every philosophy recognizes, in some form or other, this factor of self-causation, in what it takes to be ultimate actual fact."[92]

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

Because all temporal actual entities share with God the characteristic of self-causation, and because they also share with him the characteristic of transcending the rest of the universe, the universe is thus "a creative advance into novelty. The alternative to this doctrine is a static morphological universe."[93]

It will be interesting to give some consideration, in the final chapter of this dissertation, to the question of just how much Whitehead really frees himself and the actual entities of his immediate experience from a "static morphological universe." The question can only be mentioned at this point, but one can ponder the consequences for Whitehead's system of philosophy if he is forced to admit that the universe of his experience is even more static than that of Newton, against whom Whitehead rightly protested.

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[92] Ibid., 228.

[93] Ibid., 339-340.

### 3. The primordial nature of God as the instrument of novelty for the temporal world.

Whitehead stresses the uniqueness of each actual entity in the universe. No actual entity is the same as any other actual entity. Each actual entity is a novel situation, distinct from each and every other novel situation.

In discussing the Category of the Ultimate, Whitehead refers to creativity as:

> ...the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. It lies in the nature of things that the many enter into complex unity. [94]

This once more points to the fact that actual entities are creatures of creativity. However, Whitehead does not stop with a statement that creativity transcends all its creaturely embodiments, but goes on to point out that creativity is at the foundation of all novelty in the universe. Creativity is the principle of novelty in every actual entity. What creativity does is to introduce novelty into the disjunctive multiplicity of the universe. The application of creativity, the ultimate principle, to each and every novel situation in the universe, (i.e., to every process of concrescence), is what Whitehead is referring to when he uses the expression, "the creative advance of the universe." Creativity is creating its many creatures, and by so doing is bringing novelty into the universe.[95]

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[94] Ibid., 31.

To say that creativity by itself brings about the creative advance into novelty would be to deny implicitly the ontological principle. Actual entities are needed in order to embody creativity and thus, to ground the creative advance. In other words, actual entities are needed to exert their causal influence upon the processes of concrescence of future actual entities. Primary among those actual entities required for the creative advance into novelty is God in his primordial nature. If God in his primordial nature did not initially condition and determine creativity, there could be no concrescent processes to constitute temporal actual entities. It is God in his primordial nature who orders the eternal objects and makes them relevant to the various novel concrescent processes. Without this divine activity, all eternal objects would remain unrealized with respect to temporal actual entities. If the eternal objects were unrealized, then novelty would be impossible and meaningless. Thus, Whitehead maintains that in order to account for the novelty of concrescent processes in the universe, the primordial nature of God must exist as the orderer of eternal objects.[96]

Not only does God _happen_ to be an instrument of creativity in the novelty of the temporal world, but the primordial nature of God is necessary to account for the presence of novelty in the concrescent temporal actual entities in the universe. Because of God, temporal actual entities in the universe can become, can undergo, a process of concrescence. Without God in his primordial nature, novelty would not be relevant to temporal actual entities. In fact, novelty would be impossible, and then, temporal actual entities could not exist. In order to bring about novel concrescent processes among temporal actual entities, it is necessary to have ordered eternal objects as forms of the definiteness of these various processes of concrescence of temporal actual entities. However, the eternal objects cannot explain their own order, since they are not actual entities, and since every explanation must involve an actual entity. The primordial nature of God is the actual entity which orders the eternal objects for their ingression into temporal actual entities. In this way, God in his primordial nature is the instrument of novelty for the many entities of the temporal world.[97]

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[95] _Ibid_., 31-32.

[96] _Ibid_., 64.

The account of creation and of actual entities as creatures (of creativity) runs throughout Process and Reality. Whitehead maintains that every creature transcends every other creature, and is, in turn, transcended by other creatures. In this sense or context, one can see that Whitehead would not maintain that God is absolutely transcendent. In fact, he is explicit in his denial of this position.

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[97] Ibid., 248.

> ...It is to be noted that every actual entity, including God, is something individual for its own sake; and thereby transcends the rest of actuality. And also it is to be noted that every actual entity, including God, is a creature transcended by the creativity which it qualifies.[98]

Even though he denies that God is completely transcendent, in the way in which the Christian philosophers and theologians would maintain, yet Whitehead is willing to assert that without God in his primordial nature, as the orderer of eternal objects for ingression into temporal actual entities, there could be no novelty or order in the world. The so-called process of creation would then be completely ineffective, because order is absolutely essential to novelty. If temporal actual entities were unable to apprehend God by means of hybrid physical feeling which is novel along with the conceptual feelings which are derived from this hybrid physical feeling, then temporal actual entities would in fact, as well as in theory, be making absolutely no progress toward fulfillment or satisfaction.[99]

Thus, the primordial nature of God is the instrument of novelty for the world. Though the world is dependent upon God in this way, God is not absolutely perfect, for (as will be seen later) God is in a very real sense dependent upon the world. Every actual entity transmits to creativity a definiteness of character,[100] by being a ground for the novelty of creative advance. God does this especially, since he is the ground of all novelty. Beyond this, both the world and God are creatures of creativity. They are "in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty for the other."[101]

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[98] Ibid., 135.

[99] Ibid., 377.

### E. General Considerations concerning the Primordial Nature of God.

In the present chapter, we have seen a direct line of development in Whitehead's thought concerning the primordial nature of God. First, it was shown that Whitehead introduced God in his primordial nature in order to account for certain factors (temporal actual entities) in direct and immediate experience. Beginning with these temporal actual entities, this chapter tried to show the way in which Whitehead himself developed the notion of God in his primordial nature. After seeing that God in his primordial nature is necessary to any explanation of the reality of experience, this chapter considered the realtion between the primordial nature of God and two of the characteristics of reality which are most general, (and therefore most metaphysical), in their applicability, namely, the eternal objects and creativity. It is now the intent of the author to discuss some lines of thought which could have been treated at the beginning of the present chapter, but which were postponed until this point in order to attempt to achieve a greater continuity in the progress of the chapter.

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[100] RM, 157-158.

[101] PR, 529. In addition to the passages cited in this section of the chapter, Whitehead also refers to the primordial nature of God as the instrument of novelty for temporal actual entities in the following places: PR, 64, 104, 135, and 160.

### 1. God is not an exception.

One item which could have been discussed at the outset of the dissertation is the strong claim which Whitehead makes for God in all three of his natures. He asserts that God fits into, or exemplifies, the metaphysical or cosmological categories, just as other actual entities exemplify these categories. As an actual entity, God is not "an exception to the rules," and is not to be so regarded. The following text states this position in unequivocal language. "In the first place, God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification."[102]

It is not hard to surmise about the reason why Whitehead is insistent on this point. He was interested in moving away from the position of those thinkers who would introduce the existence of God, (because of some religious or moral conviction), in order to account for and explain the reality of their experience which they would otherwise be unable to explain. Thus, in insisting upon God's not being brought into a discussion in order to save the entire intelligibility of the explanation, Whitehead was insisting on internal consistency in his own thought (and by implication, in the thought of other men.)

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[102] *Ibid.*, 521.

Whitehead's introduction of the primordial nature of God is surely and admittedly an effort to account for and explain the reality of experience which he would otherwise be unable to explain. The point seems to be that God should not be introduced as a *deus ex machina* device in order to patch up a set of metaphysical propositions which otherwise, in their combination, are incoherent. Perhaps, for example, this was the role of God in Cartesian metaphysics, in which the arbitrary disconnection of metaphysical principles (mind and body) with resultant bifurcation of nature, produces a situation in which coherence can only be realized by an appeal to God.

Since this statement is as strong and definite as it is, it will be used to judge the internal consistency of Whitehead's thought concerning God, in the evaluation to be presented in the final chapter of this dissertation. If Whitehead demands consistency of others, and if he asserts that what he is setting forth concerning God is itself consistent, then it seems both eminently fair and reasonable to examine Whitehead's thought concerning God in the light of a standard which he himself has set up.

### 2. God is di-polar.

One of the ways in which God is like other actual entities is based on the fact that all actual entities, including God, are di-polar, i.e., all actual entities have both a physical pole and a mental pole. No actual entity is without them, even though one aspect may be more important in one being, while the other aspect is more important in another being.[103]

Like other actual entities, God has both a mental pole and a physical pole. He has a primordial nature and a consequent nature and in this he is similar to the actual entities of the temporal world. It so happens that in God the mental pole is prior to the physical pole, and in this, God is different from other actual entities. However, in spite of this difference, there still remains the point of similarity, namely, that both temporal actual entities and God have a mental pole and a physical pole within their nature.[104]

### 3. Concise statement of Whitehead's position.

In the following extensive passage from the final chapter of Process and Reality, Whitehead touches on a number of points concerning the primordial nature of God. The passage is important enough to be quoted in full at this point. After the quotation, there will be a consideration of various individual points, some of which would tend to show that God is a unique being, rather than "the principal exemplification" of the various categories of reality.

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[103] Ibid., 366.

[104] Ibid., 524.

> Viewed as primordial he is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality. In this aspect, he is not *before* all creation, but *with* all creation. But, as primordial, so far is he from 'eminent reality,' that in this abstraction he is 'deficiently actual'--and this in two ways. His feelings are only conceptual and so lack the fulness of actuality. Secondly, conceptual feelings, apart from complex integration with physical feelings, are devoid of consciousness in their subjective forms.
>
> Thus, when we make a distinction of reason, and consider God in the abstraction of a primordial actuality, we must ascribe to him neither fulness of feeling, nor consciousness. He is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of things; so that, by reason of this primordial actuality, there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects to the process of creation. His unity of conceptual operations is a free creative act, untrammeled by reference to any particular course of things. It is deflected neither by love, nor by hatred, for what in fact comes to pass. The *particularities* of the actual world presuppose *it*; while *it* merely presupposes the general metaphysical character of creative advance, of which this is the primordial exemplification. The primordial nature of God is the acquirement by creativity of a primordial character. 105

a. God is eternal.

When Whitehead says that the primordial nature of God is the unlimited conceptual realization of the wealth of potentiality, he is asserting that the primordial nature of God is the home of eternal objects, something which already has been treated in this chapter. But when he says that God is not before all creation, but rather, is with all creation, then he

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[105] *Ibid.*, 521-522.

is expressing a notion which needs to be treated explicitly at this point. If God is not before all creation, then it is likewise true that he is not eternal in the sense of the term which theologians and philosophers of the scholastic tradition would normally apply to the God of Christian religion and scholastic-realistic natural theology, namely, that God exists perfectly all-at-once. For Whitehead, not only _does_ God _not_ exist before all creation, but God _could_ _not_ exist "by himself." Still, the primordial nature of God is physically underived, and not dependent upon temporal actual entities. Considered in this way, God is deficient in actuality.

Though Whitehead would deny that the primordial nature of God is eternal in any Christian understanding of the term, still it is clear from a number of texts in _Process and Reality_ that he regards the primordial nature of God as eternal in some sense. In discussing the fact that God is a creature of creativity, Whitehead points to the fact that God is the orderer of eternal objects for their ingression into temporal actual entities, and refers to God as the "non-temporal act of all-inclusive unfettered valuation...the timeless source of all order."[106]

As that which unifies the temporal actual entities and the eternal objects, the primordial nature of God brings together the actuality of the temporal order with the timelessness of the eternal order. To be eternal or divine, for Whitehead, is to have conceptual prehensions which are not physically originated, whereas to be temporal is to originate from another actual entity. But God in his primordial nature, unlike other actual entities, does not originate in his prehensions of other actual entities. He is instead the home of eternal objects, and his primordial nature is constituted by his prehension of eternal objects. As the home of eternal objects, the primordial nature of God is both free and eternal. And it is both of these precisely because it is underived from its prehensions of of other actual entities. Because no other actual entities exist prior to God, the primordial nature of God is timeless, and for it, there is no past.[107] To be primordial is to be first in order.

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[106] _Ibid._, 47.

In Religion in the Making, God is referred to as a "non-temporal actuality," which must be taken into consideration whenever one is trying to understand the creative advance of the universe.[108] Likewise, when Whitehead is applying the ontological principle to eternal objects, he says that they must be somewhere, and this "somewhere" is the non-temporal actual entity. "Thus 'proximate relevance' means 'relevance as in the primordial mind of God.'"[109]

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[107] Ibid., 134.

[108] RM, 94.

[109] PR, 73.

b. In the primordial nature of God there is no love for particular individuals.

God does not have concern for _this_ individual actual entity rather than _that_ individual actual entity, in his primordial nature. He is concerned that there be _some_ actual entities, but even this does not involve a love of God in his primordial nature for the individual. Rather, the concern of God (in his primordial nature) for the individual is "depth of satisfaction as an intermediate step towards the fulfillment of his own being. His tenderness is directed towards each actual occasion, as it arises."[110] But since no temporal actual entity has arisen prior to God in his primordial nature, his primordial nature cannot show any tenderness toward a temporal actual entity.

> ...God's 'primordial nature' is abstracted from his commerce with 'particulars,'...It is God in abstraction, alone with himself. As such it is a mere factor in God, deficient in actuality. 111

c. The primordial nature of God--infinite: no negative prehensions.

In his primordial nature, God is infinite because he prehends all the eternal objects, according to Whitehead. There are in God's primordial nature no negative prehensions, since there are no entities which are nonrelevant for inclusion in his conceptual feelings. The primordial nature of God "is therefore infinite, devoid of all negative prehensions. This side of his nature is free, complete, primordial, eternal, actually deficient, and unconscious."[112]

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[110] _Ibid_., 161.

[111] _Ibid_., 50.

Prior to the primordial nature of God, there are no eternal objects ingressing into temporal actual entities. All the eternal objects have to be ordered for such ingression; and this ordering takes place in the primordial nature of God. Thus, if all the eternal objects are to be ordered for ingression into temporal actual entities, they must be positively prehended in God's primordial nature.

It has been seen that Whitehead maintains that there is no negative prehension of eternal objects in the primordial nature of God, because all eternal objects must be ordered for their ingression into temporal actual entities. However, a few observations are in order on this assertion. God does order the eternal objects. If he orders them, he must order them in one way rather than in another way, since an ordering cannot be in no manner whatsoever. By ordering eternal objects in a certain way, doesn't God in his primordial nature thereby exclude other ways of ordering the eternal objects? The passing over of alternative forms of ordering the eternal objects seems to be a kind of negative prehension.

d. The primordial nature of God--deficiently actual.

Even though he maintains that the primordial nature of God is infinite because all eternal objects are positively prehended, Whitehead admits that the primordial nature of God is deficiently actual. God does not have fulness of feeling or fulness of actuality in his primordial nature, because fulness of feeling demands both physical feelings and conceptual feelings, and because fulness of actuality demands and involves an essential relatedness to other actual entities. On the one hand, the primordial nature of God contains only conceptual feelings, whereas a complete actual entity has both physical feelings and conceptual feelings. On the other hand, prior to the primordial nature of God, there are no other actual entities to which God can be related. For this reason, in his primordial nature, God is deficiently actual, since he does lack that actuality consequent upon relatedness to other actual entities.

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[112] *Ibid.*, 524.

One can easily see that for Whitehead the primordial nature of God is not exhaustive of the reality of God. In fact, apart from God's entire being, the primordial nature of God is not completely real. It is but a mere distinction of reason, an abstraction. The two principal deficiencies which Whitehead attributes to the primordial nature of God thus abstracted are that he is not conscious and that his primordial nature consists only of conceptual feelings, not of physical feelings as well. Thus, if God is to be like other actual entities, he will have to have something whereby he can enjoy the fulness of physical prehension. How Whitehead is led to his position will be discussed in in the following chapter.[113]

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[113] *Ibid.*, 521-522.

# CHAPTER III

# THE CONSEQUENT NATURE OF GOD

## A. The Argument for the Existence of God in His Consequent Nature.

Whitehead holds that every actual entity is essentially di-polar. This was pointed out in the previous chapters of the dissertation.[1] God is no exception to this general characteristic, and Whitehead is explicit on this point. He holds that God has both a conceptual pole and a physical pole, that he too is di-polar. God's mental pole is his primordial nature; his physical pole is his consequent nature.[2]

The divine experience, like the experience of every other actual entity, is two-sided. It has both a conceptual aspect and a physical aspect. Either aspect by itself is incomplete. Thus, the conceptual pole of the divine nature is not sufficient to describe the divine reality. His consequent nature is necessary to God, in order that his experience might be completed through the unification of the ideal harmony which is his primordial vision of eternal objects with the concrescing actuality of the temporal world. The consequent nature of God is "God as really actual, completing the deficiency of his mere conceptual actuality."[3]

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[1] Cf. ch. II, E. Cf. also PR, 366.

[2] PR, 524.

It is one thing for Whitehead to assert that God has both a consequent nature and a primordial nature. It is quite another matter for him to show that it is necessary to the explanation of the reality of his immediate experience that he introduce the existence of God in his consequent nature. That Whitehead performs this latter task seems to be evident from an examination of certain texts in Process and Reality.

### 1. The Principle of Relativity.

One of the characteristics of every actual entity is that it be a potential for every becoming. "In other words, it belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming.' This is the 'principle of relativity.'"[4] According to the "First Category of Explanation," every being is constituted by a process of becoming.[5] One can see from these two statements that it is logical to assert that every actual entity is relative to every other actual entity, that every actual entity must somehow enter into the concrescence, the process of becoming, which is constitutive of every other actual entity. "In fact, if we allow for degrees of relevance, and for negligible relevance, we must assert that every actual entity is present in every other actual entity."[6]

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[3] Ibid., 530.

[4] Ibid., 33.

[5] Ibid.

The universality of the principle of relativity ought to be stressed. There is no entity in the universe which escapes from the principle of relativity. Every entity, whether it be an entity which is actual and temporal, or actual and non-temporal, or even non-actual and non-temporal (i.e., eternal objects), is involved in every process of concrescence. This general metaphysical characteristic is manifested in every entity of the universe.[7]

In discussing the relationship between universals and particulars, and his understanding of the traditional treatment of these two allied topics, Whitehead says that every actual entity has a certain universal character about it, insofar as it enters into the process of concrescence which is constitutive of every other actual entity. On the other hand, an actual entity cannot be adequately described only in terms of eternal objects (the so-called universals of the "traditional" discussion), because it is true that the description of any actual entity is also constituted by other actual entities which have entered this one actual entity.[8]

What does it mean for one actual entity to be part of the process of concrescence which is constitutive of another actual entity? The organic philosophy of Whitehead sets for itself the task of answering this question. The phrase "being present in another actual entity" is Aristotelian in its origin, and Whitehead prefers to use the term "objectification." He does not mean to imply that one actual entity is actually present in another actual entity, with the subjective immediacy of the other actual entity. But an objectified actual entity is present as "objectively immortal," and in the final analysis, this is the meaning of physical presence. He does maintain, however, that an actual entity is constituted by its synthesis of other actual entities. The eternal objects are explanatory and expressive of the way in which the one concrescing actual entity is constituted by such a synthesis. Whitehead says that an actual entity is concrete because "it is such a particular concrescence of the universe."[9]

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[6] *Ibid.*, 79.

[7] *Ibid.*, 33.

[8] *Ibid.*, 76.

The notion of an actual entity as entering into the process of concrescence of every other actual entity means just what it says, and it should not be limited in its application to temporal actual entities. It can and should be applied also to God. On the one hand, it is true that the primordial nature of God--as the orderer of eternal objects--has an importance relevant to all temporal actual entities, since without the primordial nature of God, all novelty and growth and progress would be impossible. On the other hand, because of the relativity of all things, the world reacts upon God, bears a relation to God. How this relation of temporal actual entities to God takes place, namely, through their objectification in God, will be discussed shortly, but at present it is necessary to stress the fact that temporal actual entities _do_ bear such a relationship to God.[10] This is more a case of God's being really related to temporal actual entities. Of course, both ways of referring to the relation are true.

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[9] Ibid., 80.

Through the process of objectification of them in his consequent nature, God shares the actual world of each and every concrescent actual entity. This results in the movement toward completion of the divine consequent nature, the development of this nature, which depends on the development of the process of concrescence of the various temporal actual entities. Each time there is a new development in the world of temporal entities, there is a corresponding development in the consequent nature of God. As they grow, he likewise grows. It is through the consequent nature that God is able to bring to completion that which had been lacking in his primordial nature.[11]

To be completely actual is to be essentially related to every other actual entity. This is one way of stating the principle of relativity and it is important to recall that Whitehead maintains that God is not an exception to this general metaphysical principle. Since God is related to every other actual entity in his consequent nature, he is able to come closer to the completion of the deficient actuality of his primordial nature.

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[10] _Ibid._, 523.

[11] _Ibid._

The primordial nature of God is prior to all temporal actual entities, because it is the orderer of eternal objects for their ingression into temporal actual entities, because these same temporal actual entities are initially constituted by prehensions of other actual entities, and because prior to the primordial nature of God, there is no actual entity of any sort, which might serve as a foundation or basis for prehension by concrescing temporal actual entities.

Just as there is no actual entity prior to the primordial nature of God which can be physically prehended by temporal actual entities, so also prior to the primordial nature of God there is no actual entity which can be physically prehended by God himself. In order that God be di-polar, he has to have physical prehensions. In order to have physical prehensions, actual entities have to be prehended. In order that he himself be an actual entity, God must prehend actual entities. But in his primordial nature, God does not prehend physically any actual entities for the very good reason that there are no actual entities which can be so prehended. There must be another side to the divine nature, that side in which God prehends other actual entities. This aspect of God is termed his consequent nature. It is this aspect of God which completes the deficiency of the primordial nature.

Whitehead asserts that the consequent nature of God is "God as really actual, completing the deficiency of his mere conceptual actuality."[12]

It is necessary that God be di-polar. The reason is not merely that God cannot be an exception to the categories applicable to actual entities. To suggest the opposite would be arbitrary and would seem to imply the need for revision of the categories, in order to make room for the unique case of God. God must be di-polar, because he is not a creator in the Christian sense of the term. God himself is a creature of characterless creativity. A creator (in the Christian sense) need not depend "physically" upon his creatures for his experience and knowledge of them. Rather, they depend on him for their very being. On the contrary, Whitehead's God must depend on temporal actual entities. Apart from them, he is indeed "deficient in actuality."

According to the principle of relativity, every actual entity is related to every other actual entity. Because of this relationship or relativity among all entities, the world bears a relation to God. But since the world of temporal actual entities is not prior to the primordial nature of God, there must be another aspect of God's being, to which the temporal actual entities can be related. This aspect is the consequent nature of God. In the consequent nature of God, there is "a reaction of the world on God."[13]

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[12] *Ibid.*, 530.

In his primordial nature, God is "deficient in actuality." His conceptual prehensions at that point have not been integrated with his physical prehensions. In addition, he is not conscious.[14] As a consequence of this "reaction of the world" upon it, the consequent nature of God brings the entire divine nature into a completion in the fulness of physical feeling.[15] How do the temporal actual entities effect this completion of the divine nature? As was mentioned earlier, it is by the process which Whitehead refers to as "objectification," and it is to the attempt to understand this notion that the dissertation is now directed.

### 2. Efficient causality of the temporal actual entities on the consequent nature of God: Objectification.

An actual entity is not a static conception. It is not only a subject; it is both subject and object. An actual entity is not two things; but it has at least these two aspects. According to its subjective aspect, it is the result or outcome of the entry of other entities into the process which is constitutive of its very being. On its objective side, it has the potentiality for "objectification" in the concrescence of another

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[13] Ibid., 523.

[14] Ibid., 521.

[15] Ibid., 523.

(future) actual entity. The objectification of an actual entity in another actual entity is the manner in which the potentiality of the former entity is really in the process of becoming of the latter actual entity.[16]

In ceasing to be a subject, and in thus becoming an object, an actual entity acquires "objective immortality" in the concrescing actual entity.[17] This means that the past actual entity is not completely non-existent, even though it no longer functions as a subject. But it is immortal as an object. It is now part of an actually existing being, namely, the present actual entity in which it has been objectified.

Whitehead thinks of actual entities in terms of their organic processes, which are constitutive of these actual entities. Each actual entity is a repetition on a small scale of the large-scale world in the past of each concrescing actual entity. The process of each actual entity is not a "one-shot proposition." Rather, there are many succeeding aspects or phases to it. Each phase in the concrescence or process of an actual entity is the basis upon which the next stage or phase is founded. Within each actual entity can be found the reasons why the entity becomes in the way it does become. (It is significant to note that Whitehead would not favor the expression, "Things *are* the way they *are*," because he reacted strongly to what he considered to be the

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[16] *Ibid*., 34.

[17] *Ibid*., 44.

Aristotelian-Cartesian notion of a substance as a permanent substrate of accidents, and also, because he thought it necessary to make process primary in any intelligible explanation of reality.)

The reasons why the actual entity becomes in the way in which it does become are the other actual entities which are objectified in the "past" of the present, temporal, concrescing actual entity. To be objectified is to be an element in the characterization of the definiteness of the process of concrescence of some "future" actual entity. In this understanding of things, the future is not formally actual, even though it is objectively real. Every present phase in the concrescence of a temporal actual entity will be surpassed by a future phase.[18]

The way in which actual entities are relevant to other actual entities, as has been pointed out previously, is through objectification in these other actual entities. But the past actual entities can be objectively immortal, can be objectified, in later actual entities. This is done only through the physical prehensions of them by such later actual entities. The objectified actual entities are relevant to the present concrescing actual entity through the physical pole of the present actual entity, since physical prehensions (by which past actual entities are felt) must be referred to the physical pole of a concrescing actual entity, as constitutive of it.

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[18] Ibid., 327.

When applied to God, this position leads Whitehead to assert that actual entities are relevant to God, since he is an actual entity. But it is impossible for God to prehend any temporal entity through his primordial nature, because there exist prior to the primordial nature of God no temporal actual entities which God could physically prehend. In order to point to, and support, the fact that God himself is an actual entity, Whitehead introduces the consequent nature of God, so that there is in God that aspect by which God is able to prehend physically the concrescing temporal actual entities, something which is indeed impossible to the primordial nature of God.[19]

To fail to do this would be to violate both the ontological principle and the principle of relativity, cornerstones of the intelligibility of Whitehead's metaphysics or cosmology. To fail to introduce the existence of God in his consequent nature would violate the ontological principle, because the divine nature would then be incomplete, i.e., God would be without a physical pole. If God were asserted to be without a physical pole, then he would not be an actual entity.[20] But God is asserted to be the orderer of eternal objects for their ingression into concrescing temporal actual entities.[21] Thus, on the strength of the previous suppositions, something other than an actual entity would be put forth as the principle of order for the ingression of eternal objects. Something would have "floated into the world from nowhere."[22]

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[19] RM, 94; PR, 73.

[20] PR, 366. "...These contrasted aspects will be called the physical and mental poles of any actual entities. No actual entity is devoid of either pole; though their relative importance differs in different actual entities..."

To fail to introduce the existence of God in his consequent nature would violate the principle of relativity, because according to that principle, every actual entity is relevant for objectification in the process of concrescence of every other actual entity.[23] Let it be supposed that God is an actual entity, even though he has only a mental pole. Since there are no temporal actual entities prior to the primordial nature of God, any temporal actual entities which arose would have no aspect of the divine nature to which they could be relevant. If there were no such mode of the divine nature, then it would not be possible for God to be the supreme unification of the perfection that has been achieved in the perishing temporal world of becoming. If there is a nature of God "consequent upon" the becoming of temporal actual entities, then everlasting value can be communicated to temporal actual entities in a way which will overcome and transcend perpetual perishing. Such a divine synthesis would express and preserve without loss the fulness of values achieved, up to this point, in temporal processes of concrescence. No *temporal* actual entity could, from its own limited (perishing) perspective, accomplish this. The principle of relativity would consequently be violated on a grand scale.

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[21] Ibid., 48.

[22] Ibid., 108. The text deals with the source of the subjective aim of an actual entity. If attention is paid to only one aspect of the actual entity (and to the prehensions connected with that aspect) then there is present no actual entity to which one can ascribe the origin of these prehensions. When this result is applied to God, it means very simply that even God is not an actual entity without both a mental pole and a physical pole.

[23] Ibid., 33.

Those beings which are objectified in any particular concrescing actual entity constitute the efficient causes of the present actual entity. The subjective aim of the actual entity is the final cause,

> ...whereby there is determinate concrescence; and that attained 'satisfaction' remains as an element in the content of creative purpose. There is, in this way, transcendence of the creativity; and this transcendence effects determinate objectifications for the renewal of the process in the concrescence of actualities beyond that satisfied superject. 24

According to the principle of relativity, the beings of the world, (i.e., temporal actual entities), have an effect on God. That physical feeling which works toward the completion of the divine nature is brought about through the objectification of these temporal actual entities in God. There is a union between God and the objectified temporal actual entities which he prehends. God shares the experience of the

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[24] *Ibid*., 134.

temporal actual entities which he feels in his physical pole. "He shares with every new creation its actual world;..."[25]

Every actual entity which is objectified in the divine nature by God's physical prehension of it is a novel element in "God's objectification of that actual world."[26]

## B. General Remarks concerning the Consequent Nature of God.

Whitehead describes the consequent nature of God as the way in which temporal actual entities receive adequate representation in that nature which is divine. These temporal actual entities are composite entities, since they have both a physical pole and a conceptual pole, and also, since eternal objects and many actual entities are prehended through the two poles of such an entity.

### 1. The consequent nature of God is determined and incomplete.

The consequent nature of God originates from his physical experience of the temporal world, and is united to his conceptual pole, i.e., his primordial nature. The consequent nature of God, in contrast to the primordial nature, is determined, incomplete, consequent, everlasting, fully actual and conscious.

In the primordial nature, God's vision of the eternal objects, his conceptual prehension of them, is full and complete. In other words, God feels or prehends each and every eternal object and thereby orders it for ingression into concrescing temporal actual entities. No eternal object is omitted from God's conceptual feeling, and thus, God's conceptual feeling needs nothing other than what it is, in order to be complete.

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[25] *Ibid.*, 523.

[26] *Ibid.*

In contrast to the completeness and fulness of the divine primordial nature, there is within the divine consequent nature a kind of incompleteness of prehension. This incompleteness of prehension is brought about by the fact that the consequent nature of God takes its development from continuing progressive realization or ingression of ordered eternal objects into the concrescing temporal actual entities.[28]

The process of becoming of the divine consequent nature is directly dependent upon the processes of becoming of actual entities in the temporal realm, and is in a sense determined by them, precisely because it is dependent upon them. Since the process of becoming of the temporal actual entities is a continuous process, the process of becoming of the consequent nature of God is a continuous one. The continuity of temporal actual entities is different from the becoming of continuity in the consequent nature of God. The consequent nature of God is everlasting while actual entities of the temporal world are involved in the process which is not everlasting but temporal, and therefore perishing. Since the consequent nature of God could not undergo its process of becoming, if it were not for the processes of becoming of the many temporal actual entities, it is dependent upon temporal actual entities in their processes of becoming.[29]

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[28] Ibid., 524.

Every actual entity is both a process of becoming and a potentiality for objectification in the processes of becoming of future actual entities. Thus the divine consequent nature is intimately linked up with other actual entities. In Whitehead's explanation of the reality of the universe, no actual entity exists (in any static sense of the term); rather, every actual entity is constituted by its process of becoming.[30]

The way in which God in his consequent nature prehends temporal actual entities is directed by God's subjective aim. Since his primordial nature has a completeness about it, as the complete conceptual valuation of eternal objects, it remains unchanged. However, in his consequent nature, God changes since he is dependent upon the creative advance of the world.

Since the consequent nature of God is dependent upon the progressive actualization of temporal entities, there is a certain incompleteness of prehension in the consequent nature of God. Just as the temporal actual entities continue to become, so also does the consequent nature of God continue to become, because it is dependent upon these temporal actual entities. To put it very simply, the consequent nature of God is caused to become by the temporal actual entities which are themselves in a process of becoming, and which are prehended by the consequent nature of God.[31]

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 33.

Wherever there is a development in the temporal actual entities, there is a corresponding development in the consequent nature of God. This consequent nature of God supplies the missing elements in the primordial nature. In his consequent nature, God is really actual. He completes the "deficiency of his mere conceptual actuality."[32] However, it would also be accurate to say that God is actual in both poles. The distinction between the primordial nature of God and the consequent nature of God is a distinction of reason, not a real distinction. Whitehead asserts this explicitly in Process and Reality, and goes on to say that when one considers God from the point of view of his primordial actuality, then it is true that God can be thought of as incomplete. However, when you are considering God in his entirety, and not simply in the abstraction of his primordial nature, then he is really actual.[33]

God depends upon the finite beings, the temporal actual entities, for his physical prehensions. The physical prehensions of God are integrated with his conceptual prehensions, in order to achieve his own "satisfaction." The perfection of the being of God by this uniting of prehensions is the consequent nature of God.

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[31] Ibid., 523-524.

[32] Ibid., 530.

[33] Ibid., 521-522.

As Whitehead has pointed out,[34] there is a certain incompleteness in the consequent nature of God, (considered as distinct from the primordial nature of God). God's vision of the universe is as perfect as it can be at any one moment; but with further prehensions in the temporal world, i.e., with the progressive realization of the concrescing temporal actual entities, God's vision of the universe becomes more developed. The consequent nature of God is as perfect as possible at any moment. This does not mean that it is necessarily more perfect, because there is the possibility of a deterioration in the state of the total universe at some time, as compared with an earlier time. There is also the possibility of an overall increase in the amount of relative disorder in the universe.

God is continually receiving new completeness through his prehensions of the entities of the temporal world. The consequent nature of God is a synthesis of all perfection, but this perfection is dynamic rather than static. It is never at a standstill, and thus it is never ultimately complete. Neither God nor the concrescing actual entities of the temporal world will reach a static kind of completion. Both God and the temporal actual entities are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty.[35] "God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with his process of completion motivated by consequent, physical experience, initially derived from the temporal world."[36]

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[34] *Ibid*., 524-525.

2. The consequent nature of God is conscious.

Whitehead contrasts the primordial and consequent natures of God (in one way) by pointing out that the divine primordial nature is not conscious, while the divine consequent nature _is_ conscious. Since his treatment of consciousness is not confined to any one section of _Process and Reality_, texts had to be gathered and a brief summary made from them.

The main reason why the primordial nature of God is not conscious is that there are no physical feelings in his primordial nature, since it is "prior" to all other actual entities. Some physical feeling is to be found in the origin of any conscious feeling. Consciousness is always concerned with the synthesis of _physical_ and conceptual feelings.[37]

Basically, consciousness is the feeling of negation. Negative feeling is the highest point of consciousness. The perception in consciousness is the first or primitive form of judgment.[38] Consciousness arises in the later and higher stages of the process of concrescence of some actual entities. It makes clear primarily the stage or phase of concrescence in which it arises, and only secondarily manifests earlier stages of the same process of concrescence, insofar as these earlier stages continue to be components in the higher and later stages of concrescence of the actual entity.[39]

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[35] _Ibid_., 529.

[36] _Ibid_., 524.

[37] _Ibid_., 370-371.

Consciousness is a special element within the subjective form of some feelings. An actual entity may or may not be aware of various elements in his experience.[40] Though consciousness may--in some cases--be relatively simple, this is no guarantee that the complete experience, of which consciousness is a portion, is also rather simple. Human experience suggests that consciousness is not to be found in every actual entity, and in those actual entities in which consciousness is found, that it is the culmination of experience rather than the beginning.[41]

> ...Each actual occasion contributes to the circumstances of its origin additional formative elements deepening its own peculiar individuality. Consciousness is only the last and greatest of such elements by which the selective

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[38] *Ibid*., 245.

[39] *Ibid*., 246.

[40] *Ibid*., 83.

[41] *Ibid*., 408.

> character of the individual obscures the external totality from which it originates and which it embodies. An actual individual, of such higher grade, has truck with the totality of things by reason of its sheer actuality; but it has attained its individual depth of being by a selective emphasis limited to its own purposes....[42]

### 3. Contrast between the consequent nature of God and temporal actual entities.

God is to be contrasted with temporal actual entities in point of origin and fulfillment. Temporal actual entities originate from their physical pole, i.e., from their physical prehension of other actual entities, and are brought nearer to completion by means of their conceptual prehensions (of eternal objects), which are at least initially derived from the primordial nature of God (as the orderer of eternal objects). On the other hand, God originates from his conceptual pole (i.e., his conceptual prehensions of the complex of eternal objects), and his completion is brought about through his physical experience, which is initially derived from his physical prehensions of the actual entities of the temporal world.[43]

The physical pole of a temporal actual entity is of necessity the primary phase of its being, whereas the physical pole of God is the secondary or "consequent" phase for him. Temporal actual entities arise from their physical pole, while the physical pole of God is the completion of his primordial nature (the primary phase of his being). However, it should be stressed that God does not _first_ conceptually prehend the eternal objects and _then_ prehend temporal actual entities. The reason why Whitehead refers to the "consequent" nature of God is that God is dependent upon, "consequent upon," concrescing temporal actual entities. There is nothing other than a distinction of reason between the primordial nature of God and the consequent nature of God.[44] It is not as if there were a _temporal_ priority of the primordial nature over the consequent nature. To assert this would be to imply that God--in some aspect of his intelligible reality--is temporal. God is eternal in his primordial nature and in his consequent nature. That he is primordially eternal has been established in the second chapter of this dissertation. That he is consequently eternal will be established in the following section of the present chapter.

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[42] *Ibid*., 22.

[43] *Ibid*., 524.

4. The consequent nature of God is eternal.

The physical pole of temporal actual entities does not _remain_ for the very reason that such beings are temporal in character. To say that physical prehensions are temporal means that they _do_ _not_ endure permanently as subjects, but only for a certain epoch. Once this epoch has passed, temporal actual entities cease to endure, and then they lose their subjective immediacy.

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[44] _Ibid._, 521-522.

Is God similar to other actual entities in this regard, or must he be regarded as a special case? Is the divine consequent nature temporal or eternal? Whitehead does describe the consequent nature of God as "the physical prehension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe."[45] In another text, Whitehead maintains that "every actual entity is 'in time' so far as its physical pole is concerned, and is 'out of time' so far as its mental pole is concerned."[46]

Though he maintains that the consequent nature of God is eternal rather than temporal in its nature, R. C. Whittemore refers to the two texts just cited in order to indicate that there is considerable textual basis for asserting that in Whitehead's explanation of reality, the consequent nature of God is temporal in character rather than eternal.[47] However, even though God is an actual entity just as much as any insignificant thing is an actual entity,[48] and even though--as Whittemore notes[49]--Whitehead does maintain that every actual entity is "in time," still it appears that Whittemore is not justified in his contention. He is not justified because he has apparently overlooked an earlier text which must be kept in mind throughout the remainder of the work. The text is as follows:

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[45] *Ibid.*, 134.

[46] *Ibid.*, 380.

[47] R. C. Whittemore, "Time and Whitehead's God," *Tulane Studies in Philosophy*, IV: "Studies in American Philosophy," (1955), 88.

[48] *PR*, 28.

[49] R. C. Whittemore, 88.

> In the subsequent discussion, 'actual entity' will be taken to mean a conditioned actual entity of the temporal world, unless God is expressly included in the discussion. The term 'actual occasion' will always exclude God from its scope. 50

This text occurs on page 135, whereas the text which says that every actual entity is temporal in virtue of its physical pole occurs on page 380. Thus, though the author may agree that God is eternal in his consequent nature, there does not seem to be as much contrary textual evidence as Whittemore thinks there is.

Temporal actual entities are said to be "perpetually perishing" because they are not able to retain their subjective immediacy. But the consequent nature of God does retain its subjective immediacy. The consequent nature of God is "devoid of perpetual perishing," and is thus _everlasting_.[51] "The property of combining creative advance with the retention of mutual immediacy is what...is meant by the term 'everlasting'."[52]

Whittemore makes the point that Whitehead apparently distinguishes between the consequent nature of God and the content of the consequent nature of God, leaving the way open for saying that the nature may be

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[50] _PR_, 135.

[51] _Ibid._, 527.

[52] _Ibid._, 524-525.

eternal, even though the content be temporal. Whittemore asserts this because he observes Whitehead referring to the consequent nature of God as "the fluent world become 'everlasting' by its objective immortality in God."[53]

Whittemore cites the following rather lengthy text from Process and Reality in final support of his contention that the consequent nature of God must be eternal in Whitehead's system. It is a text to which Whittemore gives a considerable amount of comment, and to which we also will direct our immediate attention.

> Each actuality in the temporal world has the reception into God's nature. The corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into a living ever-present fact. An enduring personality in the temporal world is a route of occasions in which the successors with some peculiar completeness sum up their predecessors. The correlate fact in God's nature is an even more complete unity of life in a chain of elements for which succession does not mean loss of immediate unison. This element in God's nature inherits from the temporal counterpart according to the same principle as in the temporal world the future inherits from the past. Thus in the sense in which the present occasion is the person now, and yet with his own past, so the counterpart in God is that person in God. [54]

Whitehead gives in this text a sufficient basis for maintaining that the consequent nature of God is not temporal. He says that in his consequent nature God prehends (in some manner) the temporal actual entities. That element in the divine consequent nature which corresponds to the reality of the temporal actual entities is not itself some sort of temporal actuality. Rather, it is "the transmutation of that temporal actuality into a living, ever-present fact."[55]

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[53] Ibid., 527. Cited in Whittemore, 88.

[54] Ibid., 531-532. Cited in Whittemore, 89.

A distinction ought to be made at this point. On the basis of what has just been said, the author maintains that for Whitehead the consequent nature of God _is_ eternal. This is possible, even though the consequent nature of God is involved in the creative advance of the universe.

Even if it can be established that the consequent nature of God is eternal, a possible question remains. Is this "eternity" what Boethius was referring to when he asserted that: "aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta posessio"?[56] The answer to this question readily appears, when one considers that for Boethius, and for scholastics generally, it is not true that God possesses His perfection successively. Rather, they maintain that he possesses it "completely, perfectly, and all-at-once." This is not the case with Whitehead, because of his doctrine of the creative advance of the universe, of which God in his consequent nature is a part. For Whitehead, God possesses any perfection successively, since he achieves perfection only inasmuch as he prehends temporal actual entities, and this he does not do all-at-once. If a person were to assert that God in his consequent nature possessed all his perfection simultaneously, Whitehead could counter with the reply that then the divine consequent nature was not part of the creative advance, since there would be no development possible in the consequent nature of God.

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[55] _PR_, 531.

[56] Boethius, _Consolation of Philosophy_, V, pr. 6. _PL_, 63, c. 858. Cited in Etienne Gilson, _History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages._ (New York, Random House, 1955), 103.

Time does involve incompleteness, succession, and loss of subjective immediacy. But these things do not happen in the divine consequent nature. There is greater completeness in God's consequent nature than there is in the relative completeness of the temporal actual entities, which is in reality an incompleteness. It is true that some might want to maintain that the consequent nature of God is incomplete in the sense that it continues to develop, i.e., that there will be other temporal actual entities to be prehended. However, one can concede this and still maintain that it is the very essence of the divine consequent nature--as consequent--to contain within itself all that is worthwhile and valuable in the temporal world up to the present moment. In this sense, certainly, it can be said that the consequent nature of God lacks the incompleteness and succession, which is essential to temporal reality.[57]

5. The consequent nature of God is finite.

What are the consequences of asserting that the development of the consequent nature of God contains within itself the valuable elements of the temporal world, and that this divine consequent nature depends for its development upon the processes of becoming of the entities in the temporal world? It is true that the consequent nature of God develops along with the development of the temporal actual entities which God physically prehends. By this time, it should be abundantly clear--from what has been said in the previous section of the chapter--that when one asserts that the consequent nature of God develops along with the development of temporal actual entities, he is not intending to assert or even imply that God is temporal. Rather, he is pointing to the fact that it is legitimate to say that God in his consequent nature will prehend other entities that he does not now prehend. However, at the present moment, he prehends and sums up all the temporal actual entities, in their valuable elements.

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[57] R. C. Whittemore, 89.

One may see here that Whitehead is implicitly asserting the finiteness of the consequent nature of God. The development of the consequent nature of God occurs without any change in the primordial nature of God, which is complete.[58] The primordial nature of God is infinite, since it is the conceptual realization of the entire complex of eternal objects. However, the consequent nature of God is not the same as the primordial nature of God. The consequent nature of God is his physical pole, and as such, is constituted by the physical prehensions of the concrescing temporal actual entities. Since God's physical experience is contained in the consequent nature, and since "it belongs to the nature of physical experience that it be finite,"[59] then it would seem necessary to assert that the consequent nature of God is finite.

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[58] PR, 19.

### C. The Consequent Nature of God and Creativity: Creative Advance of the World.

Whitehead speaks of the consequent nature of God as the third phase of realization for creativity. This phase, which follows the primordial nature of God and temporal actual entities, "derives the conditions of its being from the two antecedent phases." The consequent nature of God is the phase in which perfected actuality is achieved. The many (temporal actual entities) have become one everlastingly (in the consequent nature of God), "without the qualification of any loss either of individual identity or of completeness of unity."[60] This does not mean that each individual temporal actual entity retains its own personal identity, when it is prehended by God in his consequent nature, any more than a temporal actual entity retains its identity when it is prehended by another temporal actual entity. What this text does mean is that the consequent nature of God suffers no loss of personal identity, and then that anything contained in, or prehended by, the consequent nature of God is not lost. Just what is saved in the consequent nature of God will be treated in the next main section of the present chapter. At the moment, it is important to consider more carefully the relation between the consequent nature of God and creativity, as exemplified in the creative advance of the world.

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[59] *Ibid.*, 524.

[60] *Ibid.*, 532.

What effect does the creative advance of the world have upon the consequent nature of God? Does it influence the consequent nature of God in any way? These questions must now be discussed, and the author will begin with a consideration of the relation of objective immortality to the creative advance of the world, in an attempt to make manifest the influence of the creative advance of the world upon the consequent nature of God.

### 1. Relation of objective immortality to creative advance.

Relatedness in philosophy must be a relatedness of actual entities. This relatedness is concerned with the prehension of "past" actual entities by "present" actual entities, "with the appropriation of the dead by the living--that is to say with 'objective immortality.'"[61]

The past actual entity has lost its own subjective immediacy, and is now a datum for the process of concrescence of another actual entity, which is still in process, which still enjoys its subjective immediacy. Each past actual entity contributes to the creative advance of the world, in three ways, through three aspects of its reality. "...the creative advance of the world is the becoming, the perishing, and the objective immortalities of those things which jointly constitute _stubborn_ _fact_."[62]

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[61] Ibid., ix.

2. Self-causation and the creative advance.

Every actual entity is _causa_ _sui_. It is likewise, as has been frequently pointed out, a manifestation of creativity. Creativity is not something exterior to the self-causing entity; it does not have a purpose separate from that of the concrescing entity. The purpose of the becoming entity and the purpose of creativity in this particular manifestation of the ultimate are one and the same.[63]

Even God is _causa_ _sui_. Not only are all actual entities _causa_ _sui_, but every actual entity transcends every other actual entity. As a result, even God is transcended. Because of the two factors of self-causation and transcendence, the universe is "a creative advance into novelty. The alternative to this doctrine is a static morphological universe."[64]

Whitehead maintains that creativity is the ultimate principle in the universe, "by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. It lies in the nature of things that the many enter into complex unity."[65] Thus it is creativity which causes the reaction of the world upon God. Creativity introduces novelty into the divine consequent nature. God is distinct in his consequent nature from any of the temporal actual entities, which he embraces in his unity of vision. God is a novel actual entity, and creativity is the principle of all novelty, even the novelty in the divine nature. When creativity as the principle of novelty is applied to each novel situation, which creativity originates, the result is the creative advance into novelty. In other words, the creative advance is this application of creativity.[66]

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[62] _Ibid_. [63] _Ibid_., 339. [64] _Ibid_., 339-340.

Like other actual entities, God is both a creature of creativity and a condition for creativity. Since God is a creature of creativity, he is affected by the beings of the temporal world; he receives a reaction from them. This reaction which God receives from the temporal actual entities, embodying the creative advance of the world, is the divine consequent nature. God is also primordial in one aspect of his nature. Even in view of this, he is able to receive a reaction from the concrescing temporal actual entities, because God is never in the past, but is always in concrescence. In his consequent nature, though he is as perfect at any one moment as he can be, he is always being augmented by his prehensions of the temporal actual entities.[67] The actual entities of the temporal world are continually and dynamically moving toward the everlasting unity of the consequent nature of God. In his primordial nature, God is moving ever closer toward the unattainable ideal of completion, by means of unifying the temporal actual entities through his prehension of them.[68]

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[65] Ibid., 31.

[66] Ibid., 31-32.

3. Novelty in the consequent nature of God.

There are at least two discernible senses of novelty in God. In one sense, novel material is introduced into the divine being by his experience of the contingent, free decisions of temporal actual entities. This meaning of novelty is contrasted with the static rest in the divine primordial vision of eternal objects. This material meaning of novelty can hardly be the *primary* one for temporal actual entities. Granted that there are ever-new dispositions of matter, in terms of the ingression of past actual entities into the present in the mode of causal efficacy, still there is presupposed *in* each actual occasion an originative source of novel re-organization.

The primary source of novelty--that which guarantees that the past will not endlessly repeat itself without creative advance--cannot for temporal actual entities be causal inheritance from the past. Rather, for them, such novelty has its origin in a certain freedom of evaluation internal to the emerging actual entity. The acts of evaluating, of feeling, which constitute the new actual occasion, and which make it genuinely new and unique, exhibit a spontaneity and a relative absence of either external constraint or internal necessitation, (even from the primordial nature of God).

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[67] *Ibid.*, 47.

[68] *Ibid.*, 530.

What about novelty in God, however? Is the material sense of "novelty" the primary one for God, or even the only one? Is divine freedom restricted to the divine experience (in the consequent nature of God) of the free decisions of temporal actual entities? Is the divine mode of "evaluating"--and hence unifying--temporal events such that it can become an inner wellspring of divine novelty?

The divine 'subjective aim' is provided by the primordial nature of God. The subjective aim of temporal entities is also provided for, in its initial phase, by the primordial nature of God, but in such a way as to leave a certain residual area of individual decision not specified or necessitated by the primordial nature of God. The primordial nature of God seems to be the safeguard of general metaphysical order, without imperilling the existence of real alternative individual decisions, any one of which could be consistent with the maintainence of such order. Even in Whitehead, God is not, it seems, really indifferent to the decisions made in time, just as long as general metaphysical order is maintained. Yet the primordial nature of God can hardly be the source of providential knowledge and care, and of loving concern.

The formal sense of novelty would seem to be primary in the divine consequent nature, because the fundamental sense of novelty for any actual entity is the novelty connected with the subjective form. "The subjective form is the immediate novelty; it is how that subject is feeling that objective datum. There is no tearing this subjective form from the novelty of this concrescence."[69] Whitehead says that the subjective form is the ingression of the novel eternal object into the novel emerging actual entity.[70]

Whitehead is keenly aware of the relation between this question of divine novelty and the entire "religious problem." Just what is the religious problem? Basically, it is connected with the concrescent process, essential to every entity of the temporal world. Will these various processes develop into some actuality or actualities, in which there will be an order in which novelty does not involve loss in its very nature?[71]

Every temporal actual entity "enjoys" its present reality through its passage into novelty. This passage into novelty does not mean that the temporal actual entity is no longer of any significance in the universe. The final phase in the passage of any actual entity is its adjustment in the ever-enlarging divine consequent nature.[72]

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[69] Ibid., 354.

[70] Ibid., 356.

[71] Ibid., 517.

## D. The Redemption of the World: God as Savior.

### 1. The consequent nature of God loses nothing that can be saved.

Whitehead says that man can come to some understanding of the consequent nature of God, but that understanding will not necessarily be very precise and accurate. Whitehead uses the term "image" when he refers to the understanding of the consequent nature of God which man can have. "The image--and it is but an image--the image under which this operative growth of God's nature is best conceived, is that of a tender care that nothing be lost."[73] God saves the world by prehending it. The world is saved by becoming "part of" God, by being physically prehended by God in his consequent nature. The world is not saved subjectively but objectively. The data for God's physical feelings, which feelings are constitutive of his consequent nature, achieve everlastingness in the divine concrescence, a process of concrescence in which there is not a "perpetual perishing," but in which there is a retention of subjective immediacy. As the world passes into the immediacy of the divine life, it is saved. The consequent nature of God is "the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved."[74]

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[72] *Ibid.*, 530.

[73] *Ibid.*, 525.

In actual fact, what do the actual entities of the temporal world contribute for prehension by God into his consequent nature? As the author has just pointed out, in his consequent nature, God makes special efforts to see to it that "nothing be lost." However, this is not all which Whitehead has said on the subject. It was also noted that in his consequent nature God saves everything "that can be saved."[75]

When Whitehead employs the phrase, "that can be saved," he seems to imply that there are some elements in temporal actual entities which cannot be saved, which must be eliminated from feeling by means of negative prehensions. This is not to say that Whitehead would maintain that there are some concrescing temporal actual entities which are completely eliminated from feeling, which are not at all relevant for inclusion into the divine consequent nature. To assert this would be to assert a contradiction of the principle of relativity with regard to the consequent nature of God. The principle of relativity _does_ apply to God in his consequent nature, or else it is not a metaphysical principle.

2. Negative prehension in the consequent nature of God.

If God rejects certain aspects or elements of temporal actual entities from inclusion within his process of realization or concrescence, then it cannot be asserted that the consequent nature of God is equivalent to the totality of the temporal world. God does not prehend the temporal world just as it is subjectively and in its own process of concrescence. But does God even prehend the entire temporal world "objectively?" In other words, is the entire temporal world positively present to the consequent nature of God? If one is referring to all the "actual entities" of the temporal world, then the answer would seem to be affirmative, because of the principle of relativity and its relation to the consequent nature of God. However, if a person happens to be considering all the aspects of these same actual entities of the temporal world, a negative answer to the question just mentioned would be demanded.

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[74] _Ibid_.

[75] _Ibid_.

Earlier in _Process and Reality_, in the discussion of the three aspects of the divine nature, Whitehead says, in speaking of the primordial nature of God: "This primordial nature directs such perspectives of objectification that each novel actuality in the temporal world contributes _such elements as it can_ to a realization in God free from inhibitions of intensity by reason of discordance."[76] We want to ask just one question at this point in the discussion. Why would Whitehead use the phrase "such elements as it can" in reference to the elements of temporal actual entities which are present to the divine consequent nature (by its prehension of them), if there were no such elements which were prehended negatively by God in his consequent nature? The discussion of this problem will be continued in connection with an evaluation of Charles Hartshorne's interpretation of Whitehead's philosophy.

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[76] _Ibid_., 134. Italics mine.

3. The salvation of the world: its meaning.

But what does it mean to say that God saves the world? In this entire discussion, this question has not been sufficiently considered. Every actual entity has two aspects, the aspect in which it is a process of concrescence toward self-realization and the aspect in which it is a potential for a process of becoming of another actual entity.[77] Even though a temporal actual perishes as a subject according to the latter-mentioned aspect of its nature, it provides various data from the process of becoming, of concrescence, of other actual entities, God included.

From the entire multitude of data provided by the concrescing actual entities of the temporal world, God selects those which can be saved, and does save them by incorporating them into his consequent nature, by means of his physical prehension of them. Once they have been prehended positively in the consequent nature of God, the temporal actual entities no longer need have any "fear" of perpetual perishing. In this respect, God's physical prehension of entities "saves" them in a sense in which they are not saved by any temporal physical prehension. What elements can be saved, and what elements are unable to be saved? What does God incorporate into his consequent nature, and what must he reject?

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[77] Ibid., 33.

God rejects evil. Whitehead clearly asserts this in the following text, though he is very careful regarding the way in which he makes his statement.

> ...The revolts of destructive evil, purely self-regarding, are dismissed into their triviality of merely individual facts; and yet the good they did achieve in individual joy, in individual sorrow, in the introduction of needed contrast, is yet saved by its relation to the completed whole.[78]

In his consequent nature, God saves the good which he finds even in evil individual situations and factors. "The nature of evil is that the character of things are mutually obstructive."[79] Even those facts, Whitehead asserts, which are evil, have contributed some elements of good, though these elements of good might not be of great magnitude. Since they are good, i.e., since they do not involve obstruction within themselves, or in relation to the other elements with which they are joined in experience, God is able to save them.[80]

## 4. Resumé.

The author has pointed out that Whitehead cannot consistently admit that there are any temporal actual entities which are not prehended physically by God in his consequent nature, for such an admission would involve at least an implicit denial of the principle of universal relativity. Given this principle, there are no entities of which this could not be said. He also pointed out that Whitehead maintains that God might not receive certain evil elements of temporal actual entities into his consequent nature, because these certain elements (whatever they may be) are not apt for, or compatible with, such a reception. In other words, the author is pointing out the possibility, for Whitehead, of admitting negative prehension in the divine consequent nature. Now it would seem that the temporal actual entities do not exist in the divine consequent nature in the same mode which they enjoyed and realized in the temporal world.

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[78] Ibid., 525.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

5. God is not the totality of his effects.

In an article entitled "Whitehead's Idea of God," Charles Hartshorne maintains that the most reasonable interpretation of Whitehead's position would be to assert that God is the "supreme totality of all his effects."[81] This does not seem to be an interpretation which a student of Whitehead's writings can consistently make. For instance, when Whitehead says that "destructive evil" is excluded from the divine consequent nature, because it is purely "self-regarding," and that it is dismissed into its own mere triviality, as he does say in the text cited just above,[82] one can legitimately maintain that not all prehensions in the consequent nature of God are positive.

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[81] This article appears in The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, ed. P. A. Schilpp. (New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1941), 517.

Since great emphasis is placed here on the notions of positive and negative prehension in the divine consequent nature, it seems appropriate to introduce a brief discussion of Whitehead's precise meaning of the two terms, in order to enlighten the entire discussion of the relation between temporal actual entities and the consequent nature of God. There are two kinds of prehensions, positive and negative. Every actual entity in the universe has a relationship, a "bond," with every other actual entity in the universe. This relationship is the prehension of one entity by the other. Even negative prehensions express this relationship. A negative prehension is the rejection or exclusion of any other actual entity from being a positive part of the real internal constitution of the actual entity under consideration. On the other hand, a positive prehension is the definite acceptance or inclusion of an actual entity as contributing a positive part of the real internal constitution of the actual entity being examined.[83]

Opinions in opposition to that of Professor Hartshorne are available on this disputed question. For instance, A. H. Johnson maintains that God's consequent nature is not a complete summary of each and every element of the temporal world of actual entities. He holds that when "data" are transferred from temporal actual entities to the consequent nature of God, there is necessarily involved some loss of subjective immediacy on the part of the temporal actual entities, though not on the part of God. He would assert that objective immortality cannot come about without the "death" of the actual entity as a subject.[84]

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[82] The text referred to is from PR, 525.

[83] *Ibid.*, 66.

### 6. Temporal actual entities do not exist in the consequent nature of God in the same mode as in the temporal world.

The second aspect of the reality of an actual entity, that aspect by which it is objectively immortal, is different from the first aspect, that aspect by which it is a process of self-constitution. Thus, Johnson maintains,[85] for Whitehead temporal actual entities are not completely preserved, with their entire reality in the divine consequent nature. Even though each concrescing temporal actual entity is received into the consequent nature of God, "the corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into a living, ever-present fact."[86]

This text might also be cited in support of the contention that the consequent nature of God is not temporal, since it is constituted by its physical prehensions of the concrescing temporal actual entities, but this is not the author's purpose at this point. The temporal actual entities are somehow in the consequent nature of God, but they are not there in the very same way in which they "were" in the temporal world. The subjectivity of the temporal actual entity is different from the objectivity of the very same entity. As a subject, the temporal actual has to die in order for it to be born as an object. The difference between the way an actual entity is as subject and the way it is as object is a difference of subjective form, rather than a difference of content.

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[84] A. H. Johnson, Whitehead's Theory of Reality. (Boston, The Beacon Press, 1952), 64-65.

[85] Ibid.

[86] PR, 531.

### 7. God as creator and transcendent.

Though it is true to assert that God is the savior of the temporal actual entities, the question still remains about whether God is either the creator (in any sense) of the actual entities of the temporal world, or whether he transcends these same entities. A God who is a creator is alien to the philosophy of organsim, to Whitehead's entire way of thinking about reality. Of course, what Whitehead is rejecting here is any kind of creation ex nihilo. On the other hand, Whitehead--following Spinoza--would assert that every actual entity is causa sui,[87] that every actual entity is self-creative. However, though he would admit of creation in this sense, Whitehead would be referring to a process in which each creature (of creativity) is its own creator. God is not an omnipotent creator; to assert that he was would be to attribute to God what should be attributed to creativity only. It would be better to say that God is the first instance of creativity.[88]

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[87] Ibid., 135.

For Whitehead, God is transcendent in one sense and not in another. God is transcendent in the sense that he prehends or feels, and thus surpasses, every temporal actual entity which has completed its process of concrescence, and has become objectified. There is also a special sense in which transcendence can be attributed to God. God is an actual entity, who is immanent in the world, but who goes beyond any finite cosmic epoch. This is God in his function as the primordial orderer of eternal objects, and as the foundation of all cosmic order.[89] This is something which certainly cannot be asserted of any temporal actual entity.[90]

In the usual sense of the term, however, Whitehead's God is not transcendent. A God who completely and utterly transcends the entire universe would be a glaring violation of the fundamental principle of relativity. There could be no union between the temporal actual world and a God completely transcendent. In spite of this limitation of the applicability of the term to him, God, in his consequent nature, transcends "his universe," and in so doing, is similar to other actual entities.[91]

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[89] Ibid., 64.

[90] Ibid., 143.

### 8. Divine patience.

God does not operate in mortal combat with evil. Rather, he uses patience and persuasion. God uses persuasion by presenting to the temporal actual entities the conceptual harmonization in his primordial nature which he effects or brings about as the orderer of eternal objects. God does not force the temporal actual entities to be saved. He presents an ideal, namely, his conceptual pole, his primordial nature, which the temporal actual entities prehend. God leads the entities of the temporal world toward completion and fulfillment, in his consequent nature, "by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness."[92]

As Whitehead observes, the process of creation in the universe does not stop with the consequent nature of God. The perfected actuality of the divine consequent nature passes back into the temporal world, insofar as it is relevant to the various processes of concrescence then taking place. Thus, God, in the function of his superject nature, *enriches* the world of temporal actual entities by sharing with it, as much as possible, the "perfected actuality" of his consequent nature.[93]

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[91] *Ibid*., 64.

[92] *Ibid*., 526.

Whitehead realizes that there are, among others, two factors in the temporal world which can be observed by the careful man. There is the element of order in the universe, and there is also the element of evil, both of which are present in every temporal actual entity. Although there is this tendency toward order in the universe, it is not possible to assert that the world is entirely free from disorder and disharmony. When a person is considering evil in the world, attention must be given to the relation of the "evil actual entity" to the other entities in the universe. If an entity is not all that it should be, then the society, as well as the entity itself, suffers. "Again the evil lies in the loss to the social environment. There is evil when things are at cross purposes."[94]

To say that evil is destructive, but only in a negative way, is something that Whitehead is not willing to do. He maintains that evil is both positive and destructive, while good is also positive and constructive, or creative. Evil arises when there is some kind of disharmony or incompatibility within an individual actual entity. Throughout the extent of the creative advance of the world, there is some elimination from feeling, some negative prehension: and those items are eliminated from feeling which are considered to be incompatible with the process of concrescence of the individual actual occasion. It is precisely this incompatability which Whitehead is referring to when he speaks of "evil."[95]

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[93] Ibid., 532.

[94] RM, 97.

This is Whitehead's understanding of evil, both in regard to temporal actual entities and in regard to God. There would, it seems, have to be some incompletion, some imperfection, some evil, in the divine consequent nature. If the existence of the consequent nature of God depends on negative prehension, then the kind of order and harmony consequent upon negation can only be finite and relative. There will be some failure, even in God--even in the consequent nature of God--of the attainment of total embodiment of goodness and harmony. The expression or manifestation of the primordial nature of God in the consequent nature of God would presumably involve inevitable imperfection. Time, even when made everlasting in the consequent nature of God, will fall short of the fullness of the perfection of eternity (embodies in the primordial nature of God). This is indeed the reason why God never attains final completion, even in his consequent nature.

There is an ultimate evil in the world which is more serious than any particular individual evil. The entities of the temporal world by their very nature are exposed to the ultimate evil, that perpetual perishing which follows from the fact that they are temporal. Because they are temporal, objectification is involved in their very nature. But objectification is a process which is intimately bound up with elimination from feeling. It is a fact of experience that the process from one actual entity to another involves some loss. Although some loss is involved in objectification, there is nothing in experience which forces a person to conclude that this loss, or evil, ust be the entire account of things. "The nature of evil is that the characters of things are mutually obstructive. Thus the depths of life require a process of selection."[96]

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[95] Ibid., 96-97.

This process of selection is not simply blind selection with no purpose whatsoever. The purpose of this process of selection in nature is to achieve that order in the world which will involve the least possible amount of incompatability and conflict. It is true that the process of selection does point out the evil in the world; but it also indicates the way in which the evil is to be avoided. Though some elements of temporal actual entities may be eliminated from feeling, still even these eliminated elements play a part in the general movement of the world toward an order which has some intrinsic worth.[97]

Since the temporal actual entities in their processes of concrescence can be referred to God as "consequent upon" these processes, God in his consequent nature saves the temporal actual entities from the evil of perpetual perishing.

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[96] PR, 517.

[97] Ibid.

### 9. Temporal actual entities as everlasting in the consequent nature of God.

Some philosophies have maintained that God is a being with permanence, but entirely separated from any sort of flux. According to Whitehead, such a concept would lead to the notion of a static God who is eminent and transcendent in his perfection. The separation of flux from permanence would also lead to the notion of a world which was completely fluent in nature, and which was consequently deficient in reality.[98]

This is exactly what occurs in Whitehead, in the sense that there is a kind of separation of permanence (of the primordial nature of God) from all processes, even in God, and a failure of embodiment of the eternal divine ideal. In one sense, the primordial nature of God is existentially deficient, as Whitehead continually emphasizes.[99] But there is another sense in which the "existential" world, i.e., the world of process, is deficient in "actuality" as compared to the transcendent unattainable divine harmony of the primordial nature of God, because the world of process must always fall short of the eternal ideal unity in which all opposition and discord are finally overcome. Because of this latter position, Whitehead is a true Platonist. The point is that the "fluency" of the temporal world does not complete the temporal actual entities in the measure which attains the fullness of the divine vision in the primordial nature of God.

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[98] Ibid., 527.

[99] Ibid., 521.

However, this is not a problem only of evil in the temporal world. The problem does concern the relation of permanence and fluency, but Whitehead insists that there are two aspects to the problem, rather than two separate problems involved. "There is the double problem: actuality with permanence, requiring fluency as its completion; and actuality with fluency, requiring permanence as its completion."[100]

This is a capsule summary of Whitehead's entire philosophy. The first part of the problem is concerned with the way in which God reaches the completion of his primordial nature by means of the derivation of his consequent nature from the creative advance of the world. The other part of the problem is concerned with the completion of each temporal actual entity, which is aiming at the permanence which is achieved in the consequent nature of God, i.e., the permanence of "everlastingness" in the divine consequent nature, which is devoid of "perpetual perishing."[101]

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[100] Ibid., 527.

[101] Ibid.

Whitehead refers to the temporal actual entities as "objectively immortal" in the divine consequent nature. This is accurate only with some qualification. The ordinary meaning of "objectively immortal" implies that one actual entity is present in another actual entity in a manner different from the way in which the "past" actual entity was a subject. There is some loss, some abstraction, involved in objective immortality. When temporal actual entities are prehended by God in his consequent nature, he does not prehend positively every aspect of these actual entities. It is true that some elements of these actual entities are eliminated from feeling, i.e., are prehended negatively, because they happen to be incompatible for inclusion within the divine consequent feeling. However, in that physical prehension which constitutes the divine consequent nature, unlike other processes of physical prehension, there is the permanence which is "everlastingness."[102] The question is whether there is a kind of objectification--a kind of representation--which while still involving the negation inseparable from any objectification, nevertheless escapes the perpetual perishing of temporal process.

Within the temporal world, there is no everlastingness. It is lost because of objective immortality. And everlastingness is necessary, if man is ever to achieve any depth of religious vision. The dual problem above--that of permanence and fluency--can be solved by the same factor in the universe. "This factor is the temporal world perfected by its reception and its reformation, as a fulfillment of the primordial appetition which is the basis of all order."[103]

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[102] Ibid., 527.

In this manner, God strives for his completion through the many individual finite temporal actual entities. These temporal actual entities achieve their completion through the union with their "transformed selves," in final conformity with the order, the eternal order, which is wisdom.[104]

> It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many.
>
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World.
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> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
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> God and the World are the contrasted opposites in terms of which creativity achieves its supreme task of transforming disjointed multiplicity, with its diversities in opposition, into concrescent unity, with its diversities in contrast. 105

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[103] Ibid., 527. There cannot be a primordial appetition to disorder. Creativity is the primordial appetition for order. Disorder is, however, the inevitable by-product of the attempt by creativity to express a perfection of order or unity which is inexpressible. Not even a divine "Word," (the consequent nature of God), can, in a system like Whitehead's, be really co-equal with the "Father" (the primordial nature of God). The consequent nature of God is "everlasting" but not "co-eternal."

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., 528.

Every entity of the temporal world is received into the nature of God. This does not go against the position that there is negative prehension in the divine consequent nature, because the "corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into a living, ever-present fact."[106]

The consequent nature of God is the perfected actuality, the third phase in which the universe is able to achieve its actuality. In the consequent nature of God, the many entities of the temporal world are united everlastingly. In the everlastingness which is the divine consequent nature, subjective immediacy is brought into reconciliation with objective immortality. The temporal actual entities are made immortal objectively by being prehended by the physical pole of God, and since there is no time in the consequent nature of God, there is no perishing, and thus there is no loss of subjective immediacy.[107]

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[106] Ibid., 531.

[107] Ibid., 532. There can be no time in the consequent nature of God, because of the eternal completeness and permanence of the divine subjective aim in the primordial nature of God. Time is merely the consequence of the relative incompleteness of the conceptual prehensions of any temporal actual entity (such as that of a human being). Because of this finitude of conceptual envisagement in temporal actual entities (such as men) there is no substantial continuity in our lives (i.e., no historic route of actual occasions) from moment to moment. There is no single enduring subjective aim, which can imply all that happens to us as human beings--as concrescing temporal actual entities--and which can make it intelligible. Temporal actual entities must grow (or decrease) in vision as they live in time.

The temporal actual entities are really saved by God. These entities which go to make up the multiplicity of the temporal world "perish and yet live for evermore."[108]

### E. God's Superject Nature: The Kingdom of Heaven.

Though Whitehead refers to the consequent nature of God as the fulfillment of that which was lacking in the divine primordial nature,[109] he does not think that his philosophical explanation of reality is complete, once he has given a satisfactory account of the consequent nature of God. It is true that the many temporal actual entities achieve a unison of becoming, a unity, in the consequent nature of God, but there is also a return flow by which the one becomes many.

> But the principle of relativity is not to be stopped at the consequent nature of God. The nature itself passes into the temporal world according to its gradation of relevance to the various concrescent occasions. 110

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[108] *Ibid.*, 533.

[109] *Ibid.*, 530. The question might arise about the reason why the superject nature of God has not been treated in a separate chapter, if it is a separate divine nature. In answering this legitimate inquiry, a number of things have to be kept in mind. When he turned to the discussion of the superject nature of God, Whitehead did not devote much room to its consideration in his works. Thus, if Whitehead himself did not say much concerning the superject nature of God, there is not much a person commenting upon, and exposing, the thought of Whitehead is able to say.

In addition, Whitehead did not consider that there was a real distinction between any one divine aspect and any other divine aspect. Consequently, it would be legitimate to discuss the superject nature of God in the same chapter as the consequent nature of God.

[110] *Ibid.*, 532.

This aspect of the divine nature manifests a further application of the principle of universal relativity. It is through this aspect of God's nature that the transcendent creativity, the creative advance of the world, completes itself. The transmuted and perfected actuality (from his consequent nature) which God pours back into the world of temporal actual entities includes God's nature as it develops (through his prehensions of previous concrescing temporal actual entities.) Thus, each actual entity of the temporal world which prehends God as perfected and complete, i.e., God in his consequent nature as well as in his primordial nature, prehends the developing aspect of the divine nature as an immediate fact of especially relevant experience.[111]

Since God is similar to every other actual entity, he must present the content of his experiences for prehension by other actual entities. However, since there are no actual entities prior to God, his primordial nature cannot have any feelings of any actual entities and cannot provide any such experiences for other actual entities. His consequent nature is that in God by which he experiences what has taken place in temporal actual entities, rather than that by which temporal actual entities experience what has taken place in God. Whitehead is led to assert a third nature in God, which he calls the superject nature, and which he sees as equally necessary, along with the primordial and consequent natures, for an adequate explanation of the reality of his immediate experience.[112]

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[111] Ibid.

In speaking of the threefold character of God, as similar to other actual entities, Whitehead says:

> The 'superjective' nature of God is the character of the pragmatic value of his specific satisfaction qualifying the transcendent creativity in the various temporal instances. 113

### 1. The principle of relativity and the superject nature of God.

#### a. Assertion of the existence of the superject nature of God.

Whitehead asserts the existence of God in his consequent nature because of the principle of relativity.[114] Things do not come to a static conclusion in God. Rather, the universe is essentially on-going, i.e., it is essentially in a process of completion, which is never terminated. Just as every actual entity must be a potential for every process of becoming, and just as Whitehead is led to an assertion of the existence of the consequent nature of God, so also must the consequent nature of God be relevant for inclusion in further processes of becoming. The consequent nature of God is present in the temporal world, as prehended by temporal actual entities. This aspect of the divine nature is termed the "superject nature" of God, and is the fourth phase in which the universe

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Cf. III. A. of this dissertation.

"accomplishes its actuality," the first three being the primordial nature of God, the temporal actual entities, and the consequent nature of God. In this fourth phase, the creative action is completing itself. The consequent nature of God has been perfected by his prehensions of temporal actual entities. As thus perfected, he goes back into the world of temporal actual entities, and is available for prehension by these temporal actual entities. In this role of flowing back into the temporal world and qualifying the temporal world, God is exercising his superject nature. The superject nature of God is included in every temporal actual entity "as an immediate fact of relevant experience."[115]

### b. Why God has a superject nature.

It is true that the consequent nature of God is being continually expanded, as he continues to prehend temporal actual entities. God is an actual entity very rich in experience, the experience which he has through his feelings of the entities that constitute the temporal world. In order that the principle of relativity not be frustrated or stopped at the consequent nature of God, and in order for God to share this fulness and richness of experience with the actual entities of the temporal world, the nature of God as the perfected actuality of the universe flows back into the world.[116]

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[115] PR, 532.

[116] Ibid.

2. The superject nature of God is eternal.

In the earlier part of this section, the author mentioned that Whitehead maintains that God flows back into the temporal world and qualifies the concrescing temporal actual entities with the perfected actualities of his consequent nature. Now if the superject nature of God becomes "an immediate fact of relevant experience" for every temporal actual entity which prehends the nature of God as "consequent" upon the processes of concrescence of other temporal actual entities, then it would seem possible--but not necessary--that in his superject nature God is temporal.[117]

How God is able to provide the data for prehension by concrescing temporal actual entities is a real problem. Both in his primordial nature and in his consequent nature God is eternal. This has been previously established.[118] Even though there are links between the divine order and the temporal order--both in God's acting as the orderer of eternal objects for their ingression into concrescing temporal actual entities, and in his prehensions of the elements of temporal actual entities which can be saved--there is no ground for asserting that God is in any way temporal. Whitehead does not seem to make clear how an actual entity, which is in all other respects eternal, communicates the perfected actualities of his consequent nature to concrescing temporal actual entities.

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[117] *Ibid*. Cf. R. C. Whittemore, 90. Even in view of this assertion, it must be admitted that there is a basis for a distinction in Whitehead between the proper eternity of the primordial nature of God and the everlastingness, the "unison of becoming," of the consequent nature of God. In other words, if the consequent nature of God is eternal, (and there seems to be a real basis in Whitehead's system for maintaining this), it is equally evident that the eternity of the divine consequent nature is not the same as in the primordial nature.

[118] Cf. II. E. 3. a., and III. B. 5, of this dissertation.

Whitehead is here faced with a difficulty. Either God is eternal in all his aspects, or else he is "eternal" in two aspects of his nature, (i.e., eternal in his primordial nature and everlasting in his consequent nature) and temporal in another aspect of his nature (the superject nature). If God is non-temporal in all his aspects, (and this does seem to be the logical conclusion for Whitehead to make), then God is an exception, namely, that all actual entities be temporal, at least in some aspect of their nature. If God is non-temporal in two aspects of his nature and temporal in one aspect, Whitehead will have to admit that God is a being who is non-temporal and temporal. In any case, the most apparent conclusion that a reader of Whitehead can make is the one set down in the first footnote of this section, namely, that if Whitehead himself did not have much to say concerning the superject nature of God, then there is not much one of Whitehead's commentators is able to say.[119]

3. Overflow of God: Kingdom of Heaven.

There is a definite unity in the primordial nature of God. The multiplicity of the temporal actual entities is just as definite. The consequent nature of God is "just as much a multiplicity as it is a unity."[120] The consequent nature of God is a multiplicity in the sense that it must pass beyond itself and be prehended by all the temporal actual entities. It is a multiplicity of entities "in the process of creation,"[121] since the temporal actual entities will be enriched from their prehension of God's consequent nature. As a multiplicity of "actual components in the process of creation," God is to be understood "in his function of the kingdom of heaven."[122]

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[119] Cf. n. 109.

God retains a relevance to the processes of concrescence which are continually taking place in the temporal world, because the completed actuality of his nature is prehended by the temporal actual entities. God in the function or aspect of his superject nature does not become static, because he is constantly entering into new processes of concrescence, new temporal actual entities. God is thus perpetually active.[123]

### 4. Love of God for the World.

The superject nature of God is "the love of

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[120] PR, 531.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] William Hendrichs Leue, "Metaphysical Foundations for a Theory of Value in the Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cambridge, Harvard University, 1952), 105.

God for the world."[124] This is God in his aspect as the "kingdom of heaven." The superject nature of God is his overseeing of the events of the temporal world. He does not do this as a completely transcendent creator, but as providing perfected actuality and enriched experience for prehension by concrescing temporal actual entities which feel his consequent nature.

Since God prehends that which is compatible for inclusion into his consequent nature ("the love in the world passes into the love in heaven"), and since the divine consequent nature (as superject) re-enters the world of temporal actual entities with the perfected actualities contained in the divine consequent nature, ("and floods back again into the world"), then men can truly say that God "appreciates" their suffering and sorrow and that he "sympathizes" with them. He is a "provident" God.[125]

> ...For the kingdom of heaven is with us today. The action of the fourth phase is the love of God for the world. It is the particular providence for particular occasions. What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world. By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back again into the world. In this sense, God is the great companion--the fellow-sufferer who understands.[126]

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[124] PR, 532.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

# CHAPTER IV

# CONCLUSION

At the outset of this dissertation, the author said that he would undertake an exposition of the thought of Alfred North Whitehead, as it dealt with the existence and natures of God. It was noted at the time that the three principal sources for his doctrine on God are: Religion in the Making, Science and the Modern World, and Process and Reality, and that the last-mentioned work is certainly the central work in any study of God in Whitehead's metaphysics. Having discussed the main points of Whitehead's doctrine and having observed some of the opinions of Whiteheadean scholars, the dissertation will conclude its treatment of the existence and natures of God with a review of the main points and a concise exposition of the strength and weakness of Whitehead's position.

## A. Positive Value and Significance of Whitehead's Thought Concerning God.

### 1. The nature of philosophy.

Metaphysics deals with general notions, and is concerned to a very great extent with concrete reality. The various special sciences deal with notions which are more particular than those considered in metaphysics. Also, the notions of the special sciences are frequently more abstract than those of metaphysics.

The terms "speculative philosophy" and "metaphysics" seem to be synonymous for Whitehead. At least there is no conscious effort on his part to distinguish them. In part one of Process and Reality, he seems to use them interchangeably.

It is the task of philosophy to examine the first principles of the various special sciences. As was previously noted, philosophy deals with concrete reality, whereas many of the notions of the special sciences are constructive and very abstract. In order to avoid "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" in the various special sciences, philosophy must be continuously employed to examine the first principles of the special sciences.[1]

The method of metaphysics is one of discovery. A person should begin with any experience and analyze it into its various components. Generalizations can be drawn at this stage of the inquiry. When these generalizations have been made, they can be tested for accuracy by applying them to new particular occasions of experience. It is in this way that realistic cosmology and metaphysics ought to proceed.

2. The attack on "misplaced concreteness."

The author just indicated that Whitehead maintains that philosophy is a critic of the various sciences. Whereas sciences are concerned with abstraction in order to achieve greater clarity and precision of meaning, philosophy tries to expose, emphasize, and examine the union between analysis and actual entities. This is the reverse of the procedure followed in the various sciences. Thus, Whitehead maintains that philosophy is not a science.[2]

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[1] Cf. PR, I, and SMW, III.

Since metaphysics deals with the most general ideas concerning the reality of experience, it must not make any pronouncements which are not in accord with that experience. In other words, the metaphysical scheme ought to be molded in accord with what one discovers in experience. For Whitehead, reality is concrete; it is actual. The factors explanatory of reality will have to be either concrete actual entities or items related to actual entities. This is an implicit enunciation of the "ontological principle" that, "Actual entities are the only reasons." If Whitehead introduces God in order to explain the reality of his experience, he does so because God is a concrete actual entity, or related to concrete reality.[3]

Whitehead's emphasis on the avoidance of the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" is congruent to his special concern about explaining the reality of his experience in the most general terms, (which is what he maintains the task of philosophy or metaphysics to be). Abstraction emphasizes certain aspects of reality and leaves other aspects out of consideration. As Whitehead never tires of pointing out, science deals with abstractions, not with the real world as it actually is constituted. In fact, science is incapable of dealing with the real world, precisely because it deals with abstractions.

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[2] Alfred North Whitehead, "Mathematics and the Good," The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, P. A. Schilpp, ed. (Second ed., New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1951), p. 681.

[3] PR, 27, 36, 64, 65, 66, 68, 73, 108, 113, 116, 123, 224, 252, 352, 373, 382, and 392.

If science (or various sciences) were to forget for the moment that its subject matter is not real and concrete but simply abstract, a serious error would be committed. A component of reality, of actual entities, would have been substituted for reality itself. A scientist who allows himself to fall into this error would have committed the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

A philosopher, if he is to be worthy of the name, will center his attention on the entire reality of his experience and will avoid mistaking forms of reality for reality itself. He will introduce into the explanation of the reality of his experience only those elements which he discovers inductively in experience, or which are necessary in order to account for the reality of the experience which he discovers. He will not substitute an illusion (something abstract) for a reality (something concrete). This is a profound insight by Whitehead, and it seems to be a very well-founded objection to such non-a posteriori investigations as Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God. Whitehead would receive a warm reception from many Thomists, regarding the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" as a pitfall in the explanation of reality, if only more of them would read him sympathetically. Whitehead performed a significant service to philosophy by giving special attention and emphasis to this point.[4]

3. Summary of main points of the dissertation.

Whitehead's analysis of his immediate experience reveals a number of factors. The primary items of the world of experience are actual entities. In order to account for these actual entities and for the processes by which they are constituted, Whitehead introduces the notions of creativity and eternal objects.

The eternal objects must be somewhere. Whitehead will establish the existence of God in his primordial nature by showing that God is necessary to eternal objects. Will the explanation which Whitehead here puts forth be one which can account for the reality of experience at the present time, but one which will be inadequate at another "cosmic epoch"? If the explanation is adequate, then the conclusions which form the explanation will be genuinely metaphysical laws or generalizations. From all that can be discovered from a careful study of the text of *Process and Reality*, it seems that Whitehead regards the existence of God in his primordial nature as a *genuinely metaphysical generalization*, primarily because the primordial nature of God is the eternal source of all order, regardless of the cosmic epoch.

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[4] Cf. PR, I, and SMW, III.

Creativity is the principle of novelty in the universe. Every actual entity is a particular embodiment of creativity which "in itself" is characterless. Creativity introduces novelty into the multiplicity of the universe. This is the "creative advance" of the world. Creativity gives novelty to the world, by creating the many actual entities which are its creatures.[5]

However, creativity cannot of itself bring about the creative advance (of the world) into novelty. The reason for this is that creativity is not an actual entity, and all explanations must be ultimately grounded in actual entities, according to the ontological principle. An actual entity is needed in order to exert its causal influence upon the constitutive processes of concrescence of future actual entities. The primordial nature of God is necessary precisely at this point.[6]

The primordial nature of God is necessary in order to account for novelty in temporal actual entities. Novelty would not be relevant to these entities of the temporal world, if it were not for the divine primordial nature. Novelty would indeed be impossible, and thus, temporal actual entities could not exist. Without the primordial nature of God to order them, eternal objects would not be relevant for ingression into temporal actual entities, as forms for the novel definiteness of the various processes of concrescence in temporal actual entities. In this way, the divine primordial nature is the instrument of novelty for the multiplicity of entities of the temporal world.[7]

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[5] *PR*, 31-32.

[6] *Ibid*., 377.

According to the principle of relativity, every actual entity must be involved in the process of concrescence of every other actual entity. This principle asserts that actual entities be involved in the divine concrescence, and that they be relevant to the becoming of God. Since the primordial nature of God is eternal and thus involves no becoming, and since God is like other actual entities and has a physical pole (by which he prehends actual entities), a nature other than the primordial nature is necessary in God. This second nature is referred to by Whitehead as the "consequent nature" of God, since it arises posterior to the processes of becoming which constitute temporal actual entities.[8]

God has to be di-polar because he depends upon temporal actual entities for his experience of them.

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[7] Ibid., 64.

[8] Ibid., 33, 79, 523.

This is not true of a creator in the Christian sense of the term. Apart from his experience of temporal actual entities, God is deficient in actuality. Each time there is a development in the temporal world, there is a corresponding development in the divine consequent nature.[9]

If Whitehead did not introduce the existence of God in his consequent nature, he would violate both the ontological principle and the principle of relativity. He would violate the ontological principle because God would not be an actual entity without a physical pole, and yet--even though not an actual entity--the primordial nature of God would be introduced as the orderer of eternal objects for their ingression into temporal actual entities. He would violate the principle of relativity, because there would be no aspect of the divine nature to which concrescing temporal actual entities could be relevant, since they all arose consequent to the divine primordial ordering of eternal objects.[10]

God "saves" the entities of the temporal world by prehending them as objectified. He saves everything "that can be saved." According to the principle of relativity, every temporal actual entity must be prehended by God. But this does not mean that every aspect of every such entity must be positively prehended in the divine consequent nature. If Whitehead had intended to convey the latter meaning, he would not have employed the phrase "that can be saved."[11]

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[9] _Ibid_., 530.

[10] _Ibid_., 108, 33.

What does God do when he "saves" temporal actual entities? Once they have been physically prehended by God in his consequent nature, temporal actual entities no longer are in "danger" of perpertual perishing. God's physical prehension of them affects them in a way in which they cannot be affected by being physically prehended by other temporal actual entities.[12]

The world is essentially in process, a process that is never completed. According to the principle of relativity, God's completed nature must be relevant for inclusion in future processes of becoming. God accomplishes this by the presence of his consequent nature in the temporal world. This is God in the function of his "superject nature." Because of his consequent nature, God is very rich in experience, his experience of the multiplicity of concrescing temporal actual entities. In order for God to share his experience with the entities of the temporal world, (and thus, in order to fulfill the principle of relativity), the consequent nature of God flows back into the world.[13]

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[11] Ibid., 134.

[12] Ibid., 525.

[13] Ibid., 532.

### 4. A comparison of the proof for the existence of God in his primordial nature with the "fifth way" of Saint Thomas.

Of their own nature, eternal objects do not have an order for ingression into concrescing temporal actual entities. Some eternal objects are ordered for ingression into a particular actual entity, and others are not thus ordered. Those eternal objects which are not relevant to the first-mentioned actual entity will be relevant to other processes of concrescence. Why do various eternal objects enter into the constitution of actual entities in precisely the way in which they do enter? Why does an actual entity feel or prehend some eternal objects and not others? Why does it prehend those eternal objects which it does prehend?

The anser to all these questions is ultimately based on the order among the many eternal objects. It is obvious that the eternal objects are ordered for ingression; but the reason for the order which the eternal objects do have is not as apparent. From the examination which has been made in this dissertation of the relation between eternal objects and the primordial nature of God, the reader can observe that Whitehead solves the problem of the order of eternal objects by introducing God in his primordial nature as the "home" of eternal objects, the orderer of eternal objects.

> ...This ideal realization of potentialities in a primordial actual entity constitutes the meta-

> physical stability whereby the actual process exemplifies general principles of metaphysics, and attains the ends proper to specific types of emergent order.[14] (Italics mine).

Thus for Whitehead the primordial nature of God is the non-temporal conceptual ordering of the eternal objects, making them relevant for ingression into the various processes of concrescence of temporal actual entities. There is a similarity between the Whiteheadean proof for the existence of God in his primordial nature and the Thomistic "fifth way." (The author does not mean to suggest an influence of Saint Thomas on Whitehead. It is not even certain that Whitehead ever read the text of Thomas.) A brief consideration will be given to points of similarity between the "two proofs," in order to indicate that although Whitehead's realistic metaphysics (and "natural theology") differs radically from that of Saint Thomas, both men have been able to achieve a significant insight into the reality of experience, namely, the presence of ORDER in the universe.

Thomas begins his proof for the existence of God with the beings of direct and immediate experience. With this way of proceeding, Whitehead is in complete accord. One has only to look to the ontological principle at the heart of the philosophy of organism in order to see this point of sameness. Thomas does not consider man in this proof, but is concerned only with the more difficult question of "natural beings"--those which act without knowledge of the end for which they act, because he realizes that man very often (almost always) foresees and desires the end to which his actions are (self-)directed.

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[14] *Ibid.*, 64.

Natural agents act very regularly, i.e., they all act in all cases--or almost all cases--in the same way. For instance, a piece of wood ordinarily burns when it comes in contact with fire. The limb of a tree falls to the ground when it is sawed off. A stone tends to remain in one place, unless it is disturbed, and so forth.

From the fact that natural beings act for the most part in a regular manner, Thomas concludes that there is a definite order between the agent and its actions, and between the action and the effect brought about by the action. If there were no such order, there would be no reason why the agent would act in one way rather than in another way. Thus, every agent acts for an end.[15]

Similarly, Whitehead maintains that there is a definite order among eternal objects. If there were no order among them, no eternal object would be apt for ingression into a particular concrescing temporal actual entity.

Thomas goes on to maintain that from the fact that all natural beings act for an end, one can conclude that the end of these natural beings must be intellectually foreknown. Since natural beings obviously do not know their own end, and since the end of natural beings must be foreknown in order that they can be directed to this end, there must exist--distinct from these natural beings--an intelligent being which knows the end of these beings, and which directs these beings to their end, because they do not and cannot direct themselves to their end, because they are completely devoid of knowledge. Such an intelligent being is God.[16]

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[15] *SCG*, III, 2.

Whitehead asserts that eternal objects of their very nature, i.e., in themselves, are not properly ordered for ingression into entities of the temporal world. In fact, they are not ordered at all.[17] Thus, the eternal objects are not explanatory of their own order. Eternal objects involve indecision in their very nature. They are potentially definite, i.e., when they ingress into particular concrescing actual entities, the eternal objects express the definiteness of the actual entity under consideration. However, of themselves eternal objects do not manifest any order, nor do they give any indication about the actual entities into which they will ingress.[18]

The eternal objects bear no relevance to actual entities of their very nature. In order that eternal objects be ordered for ingression into temporal concrescences, they must bear some relevance to an actual entity. This is demanded by the ontological principle. There must be some actual entity which orders the eternal objects. There can be only one such entity, because of the principle of relativity. Since no actual entities have arisen prior to the ordering of eternal objects, and thus, since there then is no source of physical (temporal) prehension, the entity which orders the eternal objects must be a non-temporal actual entity. The entire creative order of the temporal universe depends upon this primordial conceptual valuation of eternal objects. Whitehead suggests that the primordial nature of God is this non-temporal actual entity which envisions the entire realm of eternal objects and thus makes them relevant (ordered) for ingression into concrescing temporal actual entities.[19]

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[16] ST, I, q. 2, a. 3, corpus.

[17] PR, 44.

[18] Ibid.

Just as Thomas maintains that God is the source of all order in the universe, so also Whitehead asserts that total chaos is impossible, that God is the primordial source of the order which renders complete chaos intrinsically unintelligible, because God is immanent in the world.[20] God is immanent in the world, because eternal objects ingress into temporal actual entities, and because God in his primordial nature is the ordering of eternal objects for such ingression, and the eternal objects maintain (and "carry with them") the ordering supplied by the divine primordial nature. Whitehead maintains that the ordering of things in the (temporal) world is inevitable, and that this inevitable ordering is realized conceptually in God.[21]

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[19] Ibid., 48.

[20] Ibid., 169.

Whitehead expresses the function of the primordial nature of God as the ultimate source of order very well in the following passage:

> ...Thus the transition of the creativity from an actual world to the correlate novel concrescence is conditioned by the relevance of God's all-embracing conceptual valuations to the particular possibilities of transmission from the actual world, and by its relevance to the various possibilities of initial subjective form available for the initial feelings. 22 (Italics mine.)

Though a few points of similarity between Whitehead and Thomas have been indicated concerning the existence of God, it is absolutely essential to keep close watch on their points of difference, lest one fall into the mistaken notion that the thought of these two men has been cut from the same metaphysical cloth. The God of Thomas Aquinas is a God--in addition to being the ultimate source of all order in the universe--who transcends the universe which he orders, who is the first uncaused, necessary, infinite, immutable, and eternal cause of the universe which he orders. The God of the philosophy of organism, on the other hand, is finite in his consequent nature, and is mutable. He does not transcend the universe of which he is the source of order. Rather, he is immanent in it. Any wholly transcendent being lies beyond the scope of Whiteheadean realistic metaphysics.

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[21] Ibid., 373.

[22] Ibid., 374.

Though a philosopher might be unwilling to accept Whitehead's notion of a God who is both finite and infinite, still he should be cautiously aware of the divine immanence which Whitehead correctly advocated (at the sacrifice of equally-correct divine transcendence). It would be utterly unintelligible to try to establish the existence of a transcendent creator who was not also an immanent conserver of the beings of the universe which he transcends and creates. If God is not manifestly in the world of limited and caused beings, how can man arrive at a knowledge (by means of analogy) of him as the cause of all reality, the source of all order, and the summation of all that is perfect in this world of actual entities which are "perpetually perishing?" What Whitehead said about his great predecessors in the history of philosophy (Thomas Aquinas included) can be applied to Whitehead himself with equal candor and honesty.

> ...ideas which these men introduced into the philosophic tradition must be construed with limitations, adaptations, and inversions, either unknown to them, or even explicitly repudiated by them. A new idea introduces a new alternative; and we are not less indebted to a thinker when we adopt the alternative which he discarded. Philosophy never reverts to its old position after the shock of a great philosopher.[23]

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[23] Ibid., 16.

## B. Certain Inadequacies.

The strong points of the Whiteheadean notion of God have been summarized in a brief manner. To balance the presentation, some attention must be given to what seem to be weak links in his exposition of the role of God in the organic philosophy.

### 1. God as a datum in the past of temporal actual entities.

How does God provide data for the self-creating temporal entities? This presents a problem. In no one of his natures is God really temporal in the sense of being a victim of "perpetual perishing." The divine primordial nature is clearly eternal, since it is the ordering, the home, of eternal objects.[24] The consequent nature of God is non-temporal also, being "everlasting" though not eternal in the manner in which the primordial nature is eternal.[25] Since the superject nature of God is the overflowing of the consequent nature into the temporal world, it too is non-temporal.[26]

Since God is non-temporal, i.e., in his completed nature he never perishes, how is it possible for him to provide data for concrescing temporal actual entities? This is not a question of how the divine primordial nature is relevant to the world of temporal actual entities, but of how the superject nature of God can be present to temporal actual entities, since it does not become objectified in their prehension of the content of the experience of the divine consequent nature. Is God unique in this respect?

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[24] *Ibid.*, 48.

[25] *Ibid.*, 527.

[26] *Ibid.*, 135.

### 2. Is God really the chief exemplification of all metaphysical principles?

Ever-mindful of the fact that it is important for his explanation of reality not to make any claims for God based solely on religious bias, Whitehead is careful to assert that "God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification."[27]

There are many characteristics which God as an actual entity has in common with other actual entities. God is di-polar, having both physical prehensions and conceptual prehensions. He too is causa sui. The God of the Whiteheadean system is finite, in contrast to the infinite Being of the scholastic tradition. In spite of these numerous similarities between God and temporal actual entities, there are differences which seem important enough to call into serious question Whitehead's assertion that God is not an exception.

God in his various natures is the only non-temporal entity. In God there is no "perpetual perishing." He makes himself available for prehension by temporal actual entities without any loss of subjective immediacy and without perishing himself. There is perpetual perishing bound up with the nature of every temporal actual entity, even though each is immortal objectively. As soon as a temporal actual entity achieves satisfaction, it becomes a superject, a datum for prehension by future concrescing actual entities. It is not possible for temporal actual entities to enjoy their satisfaction; but this is possible for God since he does not perish.[28]

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[27] Ibid., 521.

In the primary aspect of his nature God is primordial. This means that there is no past composed of objectified temporal actual entities from which God can physically derive his origin. Whitehead cannot escape this fact within the limits of his own philosophical framework. It is impossible for a temporal entity to be _absolutely first_ in origin, because it requires a "past" from which it takes its origin, by means of physical prehension of the data in its past. It is essential to Whitehead's understanding of reality that _all_ actual entities other than God take their origin from the data of their own "past." Thus, God is in this respect unlike temporal actual entities.[29]

Since only he is primordial, only God has a complete envisagement of the realm of eternal objects. Only God positively prehends all eternal objects. If

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[28] _Ibid_., 525.

[29] _Ibid_., 34.

God did not positively prehend the eternal objects, they would then not be relevant for ingression into the concrescing temporal actual entities. These temporal entities positively prehend certain eternal objects, but they also prehend negatively other potentialities which are not suitable for inclusion within the actual entities. Whereas the entities of the temporal order prehend the eternal objects as ordered, God in his primordial nature orders the eternal objects, precisely so that they can be available for prehension by temporal entities.

Temporal actual entities derive their conceptual feelings from physical feelings. But God does not do this, because there are no temporal actual entities in the "past" of God, which could serve as "data" for physical prehensions. Thus, in the divine nature conceptual feelings must come first. They are underived.[30]

### 3. Negative prehension.

The whole notion of negative prehension poses a problem for Whitehead. An actual entity attains its individuality by means of negative prehension. Both the atomism and the organism of Whiteheadean metaphysics are at stake in the discussion of negative prehension. Any datum for feeling is either prehended positively and then rejected (as incompatible for inclusion within the concrescing actual entity), or else it is not prehended at all. The latter alternative would seem to run counter to the principle of relativity, while the former option might endanger the individuality of the prehending actual entity. This dilemma is a real difficulty for Whitehead. He does not seem to give an answer to it.

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[30] Ibid., 377.

If this problem is extended in its application to God and his prehension of temporal actual entities, the consequences of a failure to solve the problem become even more acute. If concrescing actual entities are not relevant to the consequent nature of God, how is it possible for God to save these entities? If all temporal actual entities in all their aspects are included within the divine consequent nature, and (some aspects of some entities) are subsequently excluded (as incompatible for inclusion within the divine consequent nature), a difficulty results. How can that which has been positively prehended by God in his consequent nature, (i.e., included within the divine consequent nature), subsequently be rejected as incompatible? It would seem that a revision of the entire notion of negative prehension is needed at this point.

### 4. The consequent nature of God and the ontological argument.

Certain difficulties have now been suggested regarding Whitehead's metaphysical scheme. There remains to be discussed one problem, which seems to be more basic to his treatment of the existence of God, namely, the validity of the Whiteheadean argument for the existence of God in his consequent nature.

The author feels that it is quite clear from what has already been said that the principle of relativity lies at the base of the Whiteheadean "proof" of the existence of God in his consequent nature. According to this principle, it is necessary to assert that every actual entity is present in every other actual entity.[31] Every actual entity is essentially related to every other actual entity. If it were asserted that some actual entity were not thus related, then that "actual" entity would not be fully actual. Something necessary would have been omitted from its very nature.

This principle can be (must be) applied to God as well as to each and every entity of the concrescing temporal world. Thus, not only does the primordial nature of God bear a reference to temporal actual entities (as the orderer of eternal objects), but the many entities of the temporal world must bear likewise a relationship to some aspect of the divine nature. Since there are and can be no temporal actual entities prior to the primordial nature of God, if these temporal entities are to have any relationship to God or influence upon him, it must be to some aspect of him other than the divine primordial nature.[32] It is this sort of reasoning which leads Whitehead to assert the existence of God in his consequent nature.

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[31] Ibid., 79.

[32] Ibid., 523.

If the contrary were asserted, namely, that the consequent nature of God is not a fact of direct and immediate experience, then both the ontological principle and the principle of relativity would be violated. The ontological principle would be violated, because something other than an actual entity (i.e., the primordial nature of God) would then be introduced as the orderer of eternal objects. The principle of relativity would be violated because there would then be no aspect of the divine nature to which the concrescing entities of the temporal world could be relevant. If this were the case, then there would be no possible way for God to unify in his nature all the compatible perfection which had been achieved in the "perishing" realm of temporal actual entities.

And yet, though he appeals both to the ontological principle and to the principle of relativity in support of his assertion of the existence of God in his consequent nature, what is there in direct and immediate experience to which Whitehead can point, which requires the existence of God in his consequent nature to account for it? The only direct and immediate experience of the consequent nature of God which Whitehead could possibly have--and this on his own principles--would seem to be the superject nature of God, in which the consequent nature of God allegedly "floods back" into the world.[33] But it is a tenuous thing indeed to say that one has this experience of the "flooding back" of the consequent nature of God, if he is not yet certain of the existence of God in his consequent nature.

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[33] Ibid., 532.

What immediate empirical evidence for the principle of relativity does Whitehead offer? There doesn't seem to be any such evidence. Under these circumstances, to argue that the principle of relativity applies even to God because the principle is *universal* would be to move in an *a priori* fashion or to beg the question.

Since there has been exhibited by Whitehead no direct and immediate experience of the consequent nature of God, and since Whitehead rejects the notion of a transcendent creator of the universe, to whom the entities of the temporal world are analogously related, the only way to save (i.e., to continue to maintain) the existence of God in his consequent nature would seem to be to introduce some variant of the ontological argument for the existence of God.

If there is no evidence to be derived from immediate experience, then any proof for the existence of God in his consequent nature must be a logical progression, (as distinct from an empirically-grounded metaphysical proof). A logical demonstration of God's existence is *a priori*, based on and referable to the principle of contradiction.[34]

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[34] "...a purely logical demonstration of the existence of God had to be wholly *a priori*, that is, deducted from the sole concept of God, without resorting to empirical knowledge. Whatever its ultimate

According to the principle of relativity, the most intelligible explanation of the reality of direct and immediate experience would seem to be one in which all concrescing temporal actual entities are essentially related to some aspect of the divine nature. Though he has no empirical evidence to which he can point in support of this contention, still Whitehead would have to agree that this is the only way in which the universe of temporal actual entities can be intelligibly conceived, (within the limits of his metaphysical system).[35]

It is definitely necessary to Whitehead's understanding of reality that the principle of relativity be universal in its application. The more necessary it is to his system, and the more intelligible the notion of the consequent nature of God is in itself, the more likely it is that the consequent nature of God is real, even though it is not a factor in immediate

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metaphysical implications may be, the so-called ontological argument is an essentially dialectical deduction of the existence of God, whose internal necessity is that of the principle of contradiction...." (Etienne Gilson, Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938, p. 25.)

[35] "...Even those who object to the proof as such will no doubt acknowledge that Saint Anselm took the right view of things in underlining the irresistible force with which the notion of absolute being, that is to say, of a being than which no greater can be thought, calls as it were for the affirmation of its existence by the thought that conceives it....What all those who accepted it have in common is the identification of real existence with intelligible being conceived by thought; what all those who condemn its principle have in common is the refusal to consider any problem of existence aside from an empirically given existent. (Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages. New York, Random House, 1954, pp. 133-134.)

experience. Though Whitehead does not reason in this way, it would seem necessary for him to do so, in order to safeguard the intelligibility of the consequent nature of God. In this connection, there is a passage in F. H. Bradley which is very similar in intent to what has just been said.

> ...Not every idea will, as such, be real, or, as such, have existence. But the greater the perfection of a thought, and the more its possibility and its internal necessity are increased, so much more reality it possesses. And so much the more necessarily must it show itself, and appear somehow in existence. 36

Bradley carefully considers the ontological argument in several of its aspects. At the conclusion of his comments he observes:

> ...And to be more true, and to be more real, is, in some way or other, to be more manifest outwardly. For the truer is always wider. There is a fair presumption that any truth, which cannot be exhibited at work, is for the most part untrue....37

This is similar to the Whiteheadean notion that:

> Whatever is found in 'practice' must lie within the scope of the metaphysical description. When the description fails to include the 'practice,' the metaphysics is inadequate and requires revision. There can be no appeal to practice to supplement metaphysics, so long as we remain contented with our metaphysical doctrines. Metaphysics is nothing but the description of the generalities which apply to all the details of practice. 38

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[36] F. H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay. (London, Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 351.

[37] Ibid., 354.

[38] PR, 19.

Both of these latter observations, it would seem, could be urged against the Whiteheadean "proof" for the existence of God in his consequent nature. No evidence "manifests" itself or is "exhibited" in support of Whitehead's assertion that there must be a consequent nature of God, that the principle of relativity must be universal in its application. Nothing can be found in practice which would necessarily lead a person to assert the existence of God in his consequent nature. The author thinks that it is a fair criticism of Whitehead's metaphysics to say that although it is very rich and productive of considerable insight, on this point it "is inadequate and requires revision."

> Since these admitted exceptions are not superficial but essential to this theory of the divine nature, they indicate a partial breakdown of Whitehead's speculative principles. The divergencies cannot be explained simply by the relativity principle, since they imply the presence not merely of reciprocal adjustments but of radically opposed modes of actual being. Whitehead's struggle to reconcile time and eternity is intrinsically handicapped by a method which permits categoreal description but no causal inference. Hence he cannot avoid importing some finite traits into the eternal God and yet admitting some exceptions. [39]

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[39] James D. Collins, God in Modern Philosophy. (Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1959), 321.

# APPENDIX

## PROFESSOR HARTSHORNE AND THE INTERPRETATION OF WHITEHEAD'S PHILOSOPHY.

One of the outstanding Whiteheadean scholars in the country is Professor Charles Hartshorne, of Emory University, formerly of the University of Chicago. Anyone interested in the understanding of Whitehead's philosophy should consult what Professor Hartshorne has written and said concerning Whitehead. This is especially true in regard to Whitehead's theory of God.

There are several sources for the discussion of Hartshorne's interpretation of Whitehead's notion of God. The principal source is Hartshorne's book, The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God.[1] Another main source can be found in his article, "Whitehead's Idea of God," in the Whitehead volume of the Library of Living Philosophers series.[2] An historical study, Philosophers Speak of God, edited jointly by Professor Hartshorne and William Reese, provides a number of clues to Hartshorne's interpretation of Whitehead's thought concerning God. This work also furnishes several expository texts dealing with panentheism.[3]

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[1] (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1948.)

[2] The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. P. A. Schilpp, ed. (Second ed., New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1951) 513-559.

In addition to these three works, there is a series of articles, appearing in various issues of The Review of Metaphysics, written by Professors Hartshorne, John Wild, and A. H. Johnson, which deal with the subject matter of The Divine Relativity.[4] These works constitute the main secondary sources for an examination of Hartshorne's interpretation of Whitehead. Other books and articles will be brought into consideration whenever they seem pertinent to the point of discussion.[5]

Of course, texts from Process and Reality will be cited in considering and commenting upon the views of Hartshorne.

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[3] (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1953.)

[4] Charles Hartshorne, "God as Absolute, Yet Related to All," The Review of Metaphysics, I, no. 1 (September, 1947) 24-57.

John Wild, "Review of Charles Hartshorne's The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God," The Review of Metaphysics, II, no. 6 (December, 1948) 65-77.

Charles Hartshorne, "The Divine Relativity and Absoluteness: A Reply," The Review of Metaphysics, IV, no. 1 (September, 1950) 31-60.

John Wild, "The Divine Existence: An Answer to Mr. Hartshorne," The Review of Metaphysics, IV, no. 1 (September, 1950) 61-84.

Charles Hartshorne, "The Immortality of the Past: Critique of a Prevalent Misinterpretation," The Review of Metaphysics, VII, no. 1 (September, 1953) 98-112.

Allison Heartz Johnson, "Hartshorne and the Interpretation of Whitehead," The Review of Metaphysics, VII, no. 3 (March, 1954) 495-498.

[5] Cf., for instance, William A. Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1959.)

R. C. Whittemore, "Prolegomena to a Modern Philosophical Theism," Tulane Studies in Philosophy, V (1956) 87-93.

### A. Panentheism.

Hartshorne's position throughout this discussion seems to be one of reaction to what he regards as a "traditional" theistic view of God, and of what is established by the arguments for the existence of God, commonly known as the ontological, the cosmological, and the teleological arguments. What he seeks to establish, both as accurate in its own right and as the genuine position of Whitehead, is a notion of extreme relativism, referred to as "Surrelativism," or as "Panentheism."[6] Hartshorne is right when he notes that Whitehead rejected the traditional scholastic views, both in Religion in the Making,[7] and in the closing pages of Process and Reality.[8] Whether the interpretation which Hartshorne makes of his references to Whitehead is wholly substantiated in the text of Process and Reality remains to be discovered. Hartshorne's interesting contention that Whitehead's idea of God is the:

> ...most technically adequate version of a conception of God which a score of philosophers and theologians of great distinction...have been working out since the fifteenth century, and especially during the last one hundred years....9

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[6] Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity.

[7] 70-71.

[8] 519. Cited in Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Idea of God," The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, P. A. Schilpp, ed. (Second Ed., New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1951) 515.

[9] Charles Hartshorne, ibid.

is deserving of very special attention. Unfortunately, it does lie somewhat beyond the direct concern of this dissertation.

It is not the intention of the author to evaluate the philosophy of Whitehead exclusively from the point-of-view of a scholastic natural theology, but rather primarily from the touchstone of internal consistency, and only secondarily from a Thomistic approach to the subject. Nor does the author wish to apply any scholastic yardstick to Hartshorne's interpretation of Whitehead's position. However, it is important to point to Hartshorne's assertion that God is "the supreme totality of all his effects, and their effects."[10] This statement implies both of the principal positions of Hartshorne which will be discussed in this chapter: panentheism or surrelativism, and the related notion that there is no negative prehension in God. Why Hartshorne maintains these positions has yet to be made manifest. In addition, an investigation must be conducted into the legitimacy of both of Hartshorne's contentions. Both positions can be found to run counter to what Whitehead says in Process and Reality. It will be the task of the present chapter to show that what Hartshorne maintains is definitely not the position of Whitehead.

That Hartshorne maintains that Whitehead is a panentheist is quite clear from the following passage:

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[10] *Ibid.*, 517.

> Whatever difficulties we have with his system, we regard him as the supreme example that has yet appeared of the complete application of the polar contrasts, without partiality or favor, to deity. He is the outstanding surrelativist or panentheist. 11

Professor R. C. Whittemore joins Hartshorne in claiming that Whitehead is a panentheist. He does not enter into the "vigorous discussion" which Hartshorne does, but he does opt in favor of panentheism as a workable alternative to the difficulties of classical theism.[12] However, it is not within the scope of this dissertation to engage in a detailed discussion of the merits or deficiencies of the panentheistic doctrine. Rather, the dissertation must concern itself with the question of whether Hartshorne is correct in imputing panentheism to Whitehead's theory of God.

1. What Hartshorne means by "Panentheism."

Something is relative or changeable if it becomes different than it was with every becoming in that to which it was ordered. The relative surpasses the non-relative in value and importance, and is inclusive of the non-relative, "as the concrete includes and exceeds the abstract."[13]

God is supremely concrete and also supremely

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[11] Charles Hartshorne and William Reese, eds. Philosophers Speak of God. (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1953) 273.

[12] R. C. Whittemore, Tulane Studies in Philosophy, V, 92.

[13] Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, vii.

excellent. But he is neither entirely absolute nor entirely immutable. Hartshorne goes further than this and asserts that God is eminently relative, and that because of this eminence or supremacy in relativity, God has within his being an element which is absolute and immutable.[14]

Hartshorne maintains that the God of panentheism is a personal God, and that a personal God is one who is constituted by his social relationships to other entities. He contrasts such a God with the God of "traditional" theism, who is non-relative to the world of direct experience, but who "supposedly" contains within himself relations of love among the various persons of the Trinity.[15]

He maintains that God is relative to the way that all actual entities exist. The relativity is not limited in any way. He holds this because he asserts that if God is omniscient, then he is ordered to all those entities which are the objects of his knowledge.[16] God's relativity is indeed "unrestricted in scope."[17]

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[14] *Ibid*. "...The main thesis called Surrelativism, also Panentheism, is that the "relative" or changeable, that which depends upon and varies with varying relationships, includes within itself and in value exceeds the nonrelative, immutable, independent, or "absolute," *as the concrete includes and exceeds the abstract. From this doctrine,...it follows that God,* as supremely excellent and concrete, must be conceived not as wholly absolute or immutable, but as supremely-relative, "surrelative," although, or because of this superior relativity, containing an abstract character or essence in respect to which, but only in respect to which, he is indeed strictly absolute and immutable...."

[15] *Ibid*., viii.

Because God is the supreme case of relativity, the "sur-relative," he is related to all the other actual entities of the universe. Hartshorne holds that God contains all these actual entities by the very fact that he is related to them. Because he knows all actual entities, God includes them all.

God is not only *the* case of relativity, (i.e., the "surrelative,") but he is also *the* instance of absoluteness, even though the divine absoluteness is restricted to an abstract characteristic of God's being.[18]

If the supreme being were not all-inclusive, then there would be a total reality greater than the supreme being, and thus, the "supreme" being would not be supreme. This seems to be an argument which Hartshorne would offer in favor of his contention that there is no negative prehension in the divine consequent nature. To evaluate this argument completely, one would have to consider whether all aspects of every temporal actual entity are suitable for inclusion within the divine consequent nature, and whether any temporal actual entity would "be," after it has become objectified in the prehension of subsequent actual entities.[19]

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[16] *Ibid*., 9.

[17] *Ibid*., 11. "...Entities whose descriptions imply contradictory consequences cannot be one and the same entity. Therefore God's knowledge differentially implies, and thus in our defined state is relative to, the actual state of *all* existence, i.e., its relativity is unrestricted in scope."

[18] "To include relations is to include their terms. Hence to know all is to include all....the supreme being must be all-inclusive. The only way to keep both the absoluteness and the inclusive knowledge required by the religious idea is to restrict the absoluteness to an abstract aspect or dimension of the supreme being. The supreme in its total concrete reality will be the supereminent case of relativity, the Surrelative, just as, in its abstract character it will be the supereminent case of non-relativity--not only absolute, but *the* absolute." Charles Hartshorne, "God as Absolute, Yet Related to All," *The Review of Metaphysics*, I, no. 1 (September, 1947) 34-57.

According to panentheism, the universe is literally contained within God.[20] This is stated in another manner when Hartshorne says that God in a very real and precisely literal sense possesses the satisfaction of the temporal actual entities. Though Hartshorne does not use the term "temporal actual entities," it is clear that he is referring to such beings.[21]

To illustrate his contention that God is all-inclusive, Hartshorne compares the divine memory with the power of memory of the great majority of creatures. There is a sense in which it is true to say that memory does include its objects. But in many creatures, this is not a perfect power. No, indeed! Most creatures forget more than they remember. Those objects which are forgotten cannot be said to be included within the memory of the knower. Just as a man does not speak the Russian language if he does not have the "ability" to speak the language (i.e., does not learn the language initially), so also most creatures do not retain all object of knowledge, because their "ability" to do so (i.e., their power of memory), is deficient. Only in the divine power of memory is there real perfection. Only God remembers everything. Only God presently contains the entire past in an unqualified manner.[22]

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[19] Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, 61.

[20] Ibid., 90.

[21] Ibid., 91.

There is another argument which is offered, this one from The Divine Relativity, in favor of the notion that God is all-inclusive. It is the position of orthodox theists that God is absolutely perfect, and that He possesses all unlimited perfection in the very highest possible way. Hartshorne maintains that this is an untenable alternative, unless one admits that God in his consequent nature includes each and every aspect of all temporal actual entities.[23]

It is a misunderstanding of the traditional scholastic position which leads Hartshorne to maintain what he does hold on this point. When a scholastic natural theologian asserts that God is perfect, the perfection which he predicates of God would be any perfection which does not have a limitation intrinsically and intimately connected with it. In other words, traditional theists would affirm all "pure" perfections of God, while at the same time denying all "mixed" perfections of Him. (They understand a "pure" perfection to be one in which no limitation is implied, and a "mixed" perfection to be one in which limitation is necessarily implied. An example of a pure perfection would be love. An example of a mixed perfection would be reasoning.)

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[22] Charles Hartshorne, "The Divine Relativity and Absoluteness: A Reply," The Review of Metaphysics, IV, no. 1 (September, 1950) 59. "We must remember that while memory includes its objects, memory is a very feeble light in most creatures, things are much more forgotten than remembered, and to this extent they are not included. The inclusion is deficient as such, as the memory is deficient. Only in God is there adequate memory-inclusion. Only in God is the past unqualifiedly in the present."

[23] Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, 91. "I fail to see any well-authenticated principle of value that justifies us in assuming a divine instance which, without literal containing of all experiences, has the equivalent of all their values."

This discussion does not answer the question: "Is God all-inclusive?" It does point out that an affirmative answer to the question does not necessarily follow from the assertion (properly understood) that God contains all the perfections (values) of creatures.

Hartshorne speaks of God's "personal essence," as though it were to be distinguished from his relational essence. The personal essence is not supremely relative to the other beings of the universe. But still it is correct, according to Hartshorne, to assert that God is supremely relative.[24]

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[24] Ibid., 88-89. "The total actual state of deity-now, as surrelative to the present universe, has nothing outside itself, and in that sense is the All. But the individual essence of deity (what makes God

He seems to be saying that there is no reality or actuality in addition to the "total" divine being. It is thus possible to assert (in a certain sense) that God is the "All." This is God in his "relational essence." Some men might be inclined to accuse Hartshorne and other surrelativists of pantheism. Hartshorne anticipates this criticism by holding that the divine "individual" essence is not dependent upon "the All." A complete evaluation of Hartshorne's understanding of natural theology would certainly include a thorough examination of, and an answer to, the question: "Is Hartshorne a pantheist?" A beginning of such an evaluation will be made later in this chapter.

The assertions which Hartshorne makes in the passage just quoted do not seem to be in accord with the position of Whitehead concerning the divine nature. Though evaluation of Hartshorne's position is being deferred, the author thinks it is important to point out now that Whitehead would hold that God is not utterly independent of this world of temporal actual entities, but rather, is radically dependent upon it. It is true that other "possible" worlds might have been prehended by God in his consequent nature. But these "others" have not been prehended by God.

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God, or the divine divine) is utterly independent of this All, since any other possible all (and there are infinite possibilities of different totalities) would have been compatible with this essence. The divine personal essence in this fashion infinitely transcends the de facto totality, and every moment a partly new totality contains and embodies the essence."

2. Comments and criticisms concerning Panentheism.

According to panentheism, God's essence completely transcends the totality of the present universe. And yet in the totality of what is divine, there is supposed to be an eminent relation to all other actual entities. But is this position consistent with an application of the Whiteheadean principle of relativity? An actual entity is a member of a "common world," i.e., stands in relation to other entities, which in turn stand in relation to it. If this is so, then it seems proper to infer that this common world enters into the very constitution of the being which is a member. Since the common world is composed of all its members, it follows that every actual entity enters into the constitution of any particular actual entity. Whitehead maintains that this is the only alternative to admitting the accuracy of an extreme monistic doctrine.[25]

From the foregoing considerations, it is sufficiently easy to see that there is no one actual entity which is "more" relative than any other actual entity. Rather, there is a middle ground between admitting that God is completely and totally absolute and asserting that he is supremely relative. The middle ground is the position that God and temporal actual entities are relative to each other, and that God is not supremely relative, since he does not partake of the subjective immediacy of such temporal entities.

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[25] PR, 224.

There are temporal actual entities present in God, in what Hartshorne would call "the total actual state of deity-now," but these entities are present not as subjects but as objects. They are objectively immortal in God. Nonetheless they do fail to continue to exist as subjects, once they become "objectified." In fact, it is impossible that an actual entity be subject and object in the same respect, since "actual entities 'perpetually perish' subjectively."[26]

Hartshorne maintains that God is both identical with the totality of the world, and is independent of the world in a certain respect. Panantheism agrees with orthodox theism in saying that the divine individuality must be independent (logically, at least) of this individual world of tempqral actual entities. Panentheism agrees with pantheism in holding as a basic tenet that the full divine actuality must be nothing greater than or less than all-inclusive of the world of temporal actual entities, the world of concrescing actual occasions which present themselves for prehension by God in his consequent nature.[27]

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[26] Ibid., 44. John Wild gives a rather strong criticism of Hartshorne's contention that God is both relative and absolute. Professor Wild does not give a formal argument against panentheism, but his opinion of the doctrine is obvious.

"I know of no defensible argument which offers any evidence for the existence of such a composite, deprived, and schizoid entity, partly absolute and partly relative, as he describes. Even if such a being did actually exist, its confusion with limited creatures, and its lack of perfect spontaneity and transcendence would make it an unfitting object for a rationally purified form of religious worship." John Wilid, "The Divine Existence: An Answer to Mr. Hartshorne," The Review of Metaphysics, IV, no. 1 (September, 1950) 84.

Hartshorne feels that his position is really different from the pantheistic position, because he holds that God (in some aspect) must be at least logically independent of the world of concrescing temporal actual entities. Now the ordinary understanding of pantheism is concerned with the lack of any real major distinction between God and creatures, not simply with logical distinctions between them. Professor Hartshorne has avoided the main question by introducing the logical distinction. Even if Hartshorne is not a pantheist, he does not seem to have freed himself from the accusation levelled at all those philosophers who try to maintain notions similar to his idea of divine "all-inclusiveness." This issue will not be resolved until Hartshorne advances a new argument to show that panentheism is not a species of pantheism.

While Whitehead would agree that the world of temporal actual entities prehended by God in his ever-growing consequent nature could have had different components than it actually did have, still he asserts that there is a kind of consequent necessity involved with God's prehension of temporal actual entities. Once God prehends them, he is dependent upon them for his physical feelings; he is not independent of them. God might have prehended other actual entities, but he must prehend some actual entities.

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[27] Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, 90.

Whitehead would definitely disagree with Hartshorne that God must be literally all-inclusive, of all temporal actual entities in their full present actuality. Even here a qualification must be made. Whitehead holds that in his consequent nature God prehends every temporal actual entity. If he did not take this position, then he would not be able to maintain consistently the principle of universal relativity. If God did not prehend positively all temporal actual entities, then it would not be true that every item of the universe is a constituent in the process of concrescence of every actual entity.[28]

On the other hand, Whitehead nowhere asserts that God positively prehends every aspect of every temporal actual entity. This would be impossible, for not every aspect of every actual entity of the temporal world is suitable for inclusion in the divine consequent nature. It is true that God tries to save as much of the concrescing temporal world as possible. It is also true that he takes special care to see that nothing is lost, which can be saved. But this does not imply that everything can be saved. Rather, it seems to imply that some things, or at least some aspects of some things, cannot be saved.[29]

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[28] PR, 224. Cf. also 43, 76, 226, and 522.

[29] Cf. PR, 134, 525, 531-532. A more thorough critique of Hartshorne's position on this point will be reserved for inclusion in the discussion of negative prehension in the divine consequent nature in a later section of this appendix.

## B. Negative Prehension in God.

### 1. Hartshorne's position: There is no negative prehension in God.

The discussion of the perpetual perishing of actual entities as subject and of their immortality as objects leads to a consideration of the question of negative prehension in God. Hartshorne has taken the position that there is no negative prehension in the divine nature. This assertion will now be examined.

It is clear that Hartshorne maintains that the divine nature possesses or contains all actuality.[30] According to this position, the divine nature is admittedly temporal.[31] Since God does contain all actuality, and since temporality can be attributed to the divine nature, Hartshorne is led to say that "there is no need and no tendency to deny the full individual reality of creatures in God."[32]

God has his individual "personality traits" which are completely independent of other actual entities. The panentheistic position is that "all other things are literally in him."[33] In order to avoid the contradiction of accepting simultaneously the two previous statements, Professor Hartshorne maintains that there is a distinction which obtains between the divine essence and that entire reality which we call God. However, in the text just cited from _Philosophers Speak of God_, the author fails to see why Hartshorne would be unable to consider what he calls "personality traits" to be those divine characteristics which are derived from the subjective aim of the divine actual entity. But if Hartshorne were to agree, there would not remain such radical diversity between the position of the author and the stand of panentheism. Certainly it is true that the temporal actual entities do not enter into the primordial nature of God in a constitutive fashion. Rather, the primordial nature enters into the becoming of temporal actual entities. Hartshorne's position is then reduced to the statement that the consequent nature of God literally contains all other things.[34]

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[30] Charles Hartshorne and William Reese, eds. Philosophers Speak of God. (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1953) 283.

[31] It is not the intention of the author to quarrel with this assertion about the temporality of God. What is of interest is the conclusion which Hartshorne derives from the position.

[32] Hartshorne and Reese, ibid., 283.

[33] Ibid., 22.

In another text, Hartshorne maintains that God is "the supreme totality of all his effects, and of their effects."[35] By implication, this statement seems to deny the possibility of any negative prehension in the divine nature, regardless of whether one refers to a "personal nature of God" or to the entire divine reality.

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[34] _Ibid_.

[35] Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Idea of God," _The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead_, 517.

Hartshorne says that Whitehead is constantly maintaining that God is the unity of all things, and that God contains all actuality. Since there is fluency in God, the temporal actual entities exist in the divine nature in their full individual reality as creatures. According to panentheism, the consequent nature of God is as much multiple as it is one.[36]

In defense of his position that God in his consequent nature prehends all aspects of each and every temporal actual entity, Hartshorne points to the passage in Process and Reality in which Whitehead says that God's nature is a tender care that nothing be lost, and to the somewhat contradictory position that God in his consequent nature loses nothing that can be saved. It is the apparent tension between these two points that leads Hartshorne to assert that all actuality must be received into the divine consequent nature, and to maintain that this is Whitehead's true and logical position.[37]

> But not God as absolute nor God as personal nor anything whatever can be actual in all possible ways; for that would be absolute chaos and the same as no actuality. There are two aspects of existence, possibility and actuality; and the existing power which has both aspects is, in its aspect of unactualized power or possibility, infinite and unlimited, but also completely unactualized, and is in its actuality necessarily

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[36] Hartshorne and Reese, 283.

[37] *Ibid.*, 284. Reference made is to *PR*, 525.

limited.[38]

Hartshorne has maintained continuously throughout The Divine Relativity that God is all-inclusive, that there is nothing which is left out of the divine consequent nature, that nothing is lost.[39] There can be no doubt that this is really Hartshorne's position, even if one does not agree that it is also the Whiteheadean understanding of the divine consequent nature. With this in mind, a person discovering the test quoted just above would run into some difficulty. Can this text be maintained consistently, at the same time that Hartshorne is holding that God is all-inclusive, that he receives all actuality into his consequent nature, that he literally contains all experiences? If God cannot be actual in all possible ways, there are some ways in which God is not actual. But then God must have prehended negatively these "ways of actuality." Hartshorne by saying what he does admits that these ways cannot be prehended positively. If he would deny that they are even prehended negatively, i.e., if he would deny that they enter into the divine consequent nature in any way at all, then he would be going contrary to both his own position and the position of Whitehead. He would be asserting the contrary of his own doctrine, because God would not be "all-inclusive", at least as far as these ways of actuality are concerned.

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[38] Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, 91.

[39] Hartshorne and Reese, 283.

He would be speaking contrary to the Whiteheadean principle of universal relativity, because these ways of actuality would then be not relative to the divine consequent nature.

The contradiction is not explicit, but it does seem to be implied in Hartshorne's position. He holds that God cannot be actual in all possible ways, and that to maintain the opposite position would be to introduce chaos into any explanation of the divine reality. Thus, God must be actual in some way, if he is going to be actual at all, just as among the beings of our direct and immediate experience, a being must be of some kind, i.e., a real being cannot be of no kind whatsoever and still be a real being.

If God is actual in some way, by that very fact, he is not actual in some other way. That other way of being actual must be excluded from the divine actuality. In order to exclude the "other" way, God would have to prehend it negatively. But if God negatively prehends some actuality, he cannot be said to be all-inclusive. He may contain within himself, (i.e., positively prehend), all concrescing temporal actual entities, but saying this is not the same as maintaining that God contains within his consequent nature every aspect of all temporal actual entities.

Thus, it would seem from an examination of what Hartshorne himself maintains, that to hold that God is all-inclusive is not consistent with the assertion that nothing whatsoever can be actual in all possible ways. To maintain the former position is to deny all negative prehension in the consequent nature of God. To maintain the latter alternative is to assert implicitly that there is some reality, some actuality, some aspect of a temporal actual entity, that is not positively included in the consequent nature of God. It is not the intent of the author to suggest which of these two alternatives Hartshorne would be inclined to accept as a final resolution of the difficulty. However, it is evident that not everything that Hartshorne holds is in accord with his oft-repeated principle that God is the supreme example of panentheistic relativism, and that there is nothing which is not included within the divine consequent nature.

### 2. Comparison of this position with certain texts from *Process and Reality*.

God cannot possess a "past" actual entity, because the entity no longer exists. This is not the expression of Whitehead but that of Professor John Wild in his review of *The Divine Relativity*. He asserts that the past can be included in a present entity *as remembered*, but not as present. Wild cautions readers of Hartshorne's book not to confuse presence of a past entity in the memory of a present entity with actual physical presence of the past entity in the present entity. The former is possible and common; the latter is impossible and unintelligible.[40]

Whitehead would assert that past actual entities are in some way included in present actual entities, but that they are not included subjectively but objectively. And he would also point out that objective immortality involves loss of subjective immediacy by the past entity, and negative prehension (of the past entity) by the present entity.

In his reply to Professor Wild's review of The Divine Relativity, Hartshorne returns to his contention that God has all the "absolute" perfection which any (logically) possible being could have.[41] Of course, Hartshorne continues, God does not include nonsense within his being, and he is not imperfect because he does not contain nonsense. Only God could possess any logically possible world.[42]

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[40] "This explanation is not satisfactory for the following three reasons. In the first place, though the past may be brought before the mind as what it was, it cannot be 'included' or 'possessed as a part' of any present physical whole, because it no longer exists. The child now dead was once included in the family. I may now remember him as having been such a part. But now he cannot be in any such whole. Noetic presence before the mind cannot be confused with physical possession or inclusion." John Wild, "Review of Charles Hartshorne's The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God," The Review of Metaphysics, II, no. 6 (December, 1948) 72.

[41] Cf. the extensive quote from p. 91 of The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God, given previously on pp. 240-241 of this appendix.

[42] "Thus God lacks no "absolute perfection" which any logically possible being could possess. All that is denied is that nonsense becomes sense, even in reference to God. And this is no defect in Him. On

The texts from Process and Reality tending to show that there is negative prehension in the consequent nature of God will not be discussed at this point. But there are two questions which should be asked now. If God contains no nonsense, can it be inferred that God has dismissed as trivial all nonsensical items? If God has dismissed all elements of nonsense, has he prehended them negatively?

In an Appendix to Whitehead's Theory of Reality, Johnson has reprinted a few manuscript pages, of a work dealing with Whitehead's philosophy, which he had given to Whitehead himself for comment or criticism.[43] Johnson discusses negative prehension and the divine consequent nature. He refers to passages from Process and Reality,[44] in which Whitehead speaks of the temporal actual entities contributing what they can to the enrichment of the consequent nature of God, and of God in his consequent nature dismissing into triviality certain evil elements of the temporal world. Whitehead has appended a hand-written footnote to this passage, in which he expresses agreement with Johnson that some

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the other hand,...God might have adequately possessed various world that might have existed; no one but God could (with even logical possibility) be conceived as adequately possessing any world whatever." Charles Hartshorne, "The Divine Relativity and Absoluteness: A Reply," The Review of Metaphysics, IV, no. 1 (September, 1950) 36.

[43] Allison Heartz Johnson, Whitehead's Theory of Reality. (Boston, the Beacon Press, 1952) 217.

[44] PR, 134, 525.

evil elements are dismissed from the divine consequent nature.[45] If Whitehead thought that there were no negative prehension in God's consequent nature, would he have agreed that evil is dismissed from it?

In a later section of the same passage, Johnson maintains that "while there is no elimination within God's nature as such, there is of course elimination of some of the data available for inclusion in God's nature."[46] Whitehead makes no comment on this passage. Does this mean that he therefore agrees with the interpretation which Johnson makes? While no final answer to this question can be given, the author can point to a statement which Johnson made at the beginning of the series of reprinted pages. "The _absence of objection_, by Whitehead, to the details of the exposition of his position is significant."[47]

Though most of Whitehead's discussion of the divine consequent nature is confined to the final chapter of _Process and Reality_, there is an earlier text in which he discusses the characteristics of every actual entity, and in which he compares God and other actual entities.[48] This text _points to_ the conclusion that there is negative prehension in the consequent nature of God. The primordial nature of God is the orderer of eternal objects. As such, it sets up

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[45] Johnson, 217.

[46] _Ibid_.

[47] _Ibid_., 213.

[48] _PR_, 134.

"perspectives of objectification" for the concrescing temporal actual entities. These actual entities of the temporal world are thereby enabled to contribute data for feeling or prehension in the divine consequent nature.

> This primordial nature directs such perspectives of objectification that each novel actuality in the temporal world contributes such elements as it can to a realization in God free from inhibitions of intensity by reason of discordance.[49]

If Whitehead were trying to convey the meaning that each and every temporal actual entity were prehended in its entirety by God in his consequent nature, would he use the expression "such elements as it can"? The more likely phrase would have been, "Every temporal actuality contributes all its aspects to God in his consequent nature as data for his positive physical prehension of them."

There seems to be a strong indication in favor of negative prehension in God's consequent nature, even if it be only an indication and not a demonstration. However, this is not the only passage in Process and Reality which can be offered contrary to the interpretation of Hartshorne.

In his consequent nature, God is truly an actual entity, just as much as any entity of the temporal world is actual. There is a definiteness which is characteristic of every actual entity. If the actual entity is of such-and-such a kind, then by the very nature of the situation it is not of some other kind. Other alternative characteristics are thereby eliminated from the actual entity. How are alternatives eliminated from feeling, except through negative prehension? It is true that as an actual entity God has a definite character. "The fact of incompatible alternatives is the ultimate fact in virtue of which there is definite character."[50]

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[49] Ibid., 134-135.

If God is definite as an actual entity, then there must be some alternatives which are incompatible for inclusion within his concrescing consequent nature. If there are some alternatives which are thus incompatible, then he must prehend them negatively, since--according to the principle of universal relativity--he has to prehend them in one way or the other.

If this text refers only to prehension of eternal objects, then a difficulty arises. It is necessary that God prehend all eternal objects positively, in order that they be ordered for ingression into concrescing temporal actual entities. Thus, if God were not to prehend positively any eternal object, that eternal object would never be able to be felt by a concrescing temporal actual entity. Under these circumstances, can it be asserted on the basis of this single text that there is negative prehension in God?

Even if it be admitted, as it must be, that Whitehead maintains that God positively prehends each and every eternal object, because all eternal objects must be ordered for ingression into temporal actual entities, still it seems possible to assert that there is negative prehension even in the primordial nature of God. It is true that God does order the eternal objects. He orders them in a certain way, whatever that way may be, since to speak of an order which is an order in no way or manner is to speak unintelligibly. By ordering the various eternal objects in one way, in his primordial nature, God thereby excludes other manners or ways of ordering these eternal objects. The exclusion of other ways of ordering the eternal objects would appear to be a species of negative prehension.[51]

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[50] Ibid., 367.

How does God prehend the data of concrescing temporal actual entities? How are these entities able to be data for physical prehension by God in his consequent nature? The entities of the temporal world are objectively immortal, and thus, God is able to prehend them, either positively or negatively. All temporal actual entities are prehended in some way by God, because of the principle of relativity.

When one actual entity is objectified in another actual entity, the former entity is not totally and completely included in the present actual entity. There has been some loss, some negative prehension.

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[51] Cf. II. E. 3. c., of this dissertation.

"Objectification involves elimination. The present fact has not the past fact within it with any full immediacy."[52]

Johnson maintains that the transfer from the concrescing temporal actual entities to the consequent nature of God involves some loss of content. To have a loss of content, an entity must not be prehended positively in all its aspects. The entity which prehends it, whether this "later" entity be a temporal actual entity or God, must have some negative prehension.

He also points to the fact that objectification cannot take place without the former entity ceasing to exist as a subject, and existing only as an object for the feeling or prehension of the present actual entity. The coming-into-being of the present entity involves the death, the passing-out-of-being, of the former entity. There is then a fundamental difference between the states of subjective immediacy (in which the former or present entity is "alive") and causal efficacy (in which the former entity is now "dead," no longer enjoying its own subjective immediacy).[53]

In his consequent nature, God dismisses from Himself the evil which is found in merely individual items or facts, while he is trying to achieve the greatest possible value from the data presented to him by the temporal actual entities, which have become objectively immortal, and suitable for prehension in some way in his consequent nature.

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[52] _PR_, 517.

[53] Johnson, 64-65.

"The image--and it is but an image--the image under which this operative growth of God's nature is best conceived, is that of a tender care that nothing be lost."[54] Whitehead does say that it is possible to consider God in his consequent nature as trying to "save" all the temporal actual entities. But he also maintains that the divine consequent nature is "the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved."[55]

If God prehends positively, (i.e., saves), every aspect of all the concrescing temporal actual entities which are relevant to him in his consequent nature, why does Whitehead use the expression "that can be saved?" Is it superfluous, on the supposition that there is really nothing that is lost from the world of temporal actual entities? Or is it the case that Whitehead uses this expression, because he thinks that there are some elements of temporal actual entities which cannot be suitable for inclusion in his consequent nature? It is essential to notice the exact words which Whitehead employs when he speaks of God's physical prehension of temporal actual entities. It seems correct that the expression "that can be saved" implies that there are some aspects of concrescing actual entities which cannot be saved. If some aspects cannot be saved, then they are not positively prehended by God. They are prehended negatively or eliminated from feeling.[56] On the basis of this interpretation, it is difficult to maintain the position which Hartshorne advocates.

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[54] PR, 525.

[55] Ibid.

> Each actuality in the temporal world has its reception into God's nature. The corresponding element in God's nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into a living, ever-present fact. [57]

This is the strongest text in Process and Reality which can be cited in opposition to the contention that there is no negative prehension in the consequent nature of God. It is obvious that this statement is in accord with the oft-cited principle of universal relativity, because it shows that every temporal actual entity is prehended by God. However, it is also easy to see that everything that was present in the temporal entity in its concrescence is not present in the divine consequent nature. Although the temporal actual entity has to die in order to become objectively immortal, that in God's consequent nature which corresponds to the temporal entity is no longer dead but is living.

> In this way, the insistent craving is justified--the insistent craving that zest for existence be refreshed by the ever-present, unfading importance of our immediate actions, which perish

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 531.

yet live for evermore.[58]

The unmistakable conclusion from a consideration of these texts seems to be that in his consequent nature God collectively prehends the data for inclusion into this nature. This is also the opinion of W. A. Christian, in his book, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics.[59] The following text shows that God is not a "supreme totality of all his effects and of their effects," since there are certain elements in an actual entity left out of consideration when it is prehended by God in his consequent nature.

> a. God prehends actual occasions, but he does not share their immediacy. Actual occasions enter into God's experience, but they do so as objects of his physical prehensions. God's prehension of an actual occasion is the objectification of that actual occasion for God. And an objectified entity has perished and lost its subjective immediacy. It is functioning as an object and not as a subject. It is an objectified subject. 60

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[58] *Ibid.*, 533.

[59] (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1959) 405.

[60] *Ibid.*.

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# VITA AUCTORIS

George Edward Connelly was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on February 7, 1934. He completed his elementary education in the parochial schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago. In June, 1951, he was graduated from Saint Ignatius High School, Chicago. He entered Loyola University, Chicago, in September, 1951, and was graduated in February, 1955. The next year and a half were spent in pursuing graduate studies in philosophy at Loyola University, Chicago. In September, 1956, he entered the Graduate School of Saint Louis University. From 1956 until 1959, he was a graduate fellow in philosophy. Following his marriage in August, 1958, he was a part-time Instructor of Philosophy at Maryville College, Saint Louis, for one year. Since October, 1959, he has been a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. From 1959 until 1961, he was an instructor of Philosophy at the University of Scranton. Currently, he is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University, Chicago.